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All square
on Teesside

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Steven Mackintosh: Oscar Wilde and
A woman's bloke

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IN THE MONDAY REVIEW + NETWORK

New pensions windfall for 60,000

THOUSANDS of victims of the pensions mis-selling scandal are to receive extra compensation payments averaging £3,000 because of a blunder in the way their entitlements were calculated.

The additional payments, to up to 60,000 people, will add about £200m to the pension industry's bill for clearing up the scandal. But it will also mean a further delay of up to a year settling claims because of the number of cases that now need to be reviewed.

The Treasury's latest estimate puts the total cost of the scandal at £1bn. More than

BY ANDREW VERTIY AND
DIANE COYLE

600,000 victims, many of whom are already retired or have died, have been offered an average of £13,000 each in compensation.

But the watchdog conducting the review, the Financial Services Authority, has confirmed that many of them have been paid too little – because insurers failed to take account of changes in employment when they worked out the compensation.

The payments are designed to reimburse policy holders for

the employers' pension contributions that they missed out on by switching to a personal pension. More than £2.5bn has already been paid out.

But most payouts failed to take account of further losses accrued when victims changed jobs, thereby missing out on contributions from their new employer. Compensation was instead confined to the first job.

PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the leading consultants helping insurers with the review, estimates that up to 60,000 cases will have to be reviewed. Payouts are likely to rise by 20 per cent each, or around £3,000.

The FSA only clarified the situation last month – four years after the review began in October 1994.

After pressure from the industry, the regulator issued a bulletin instructing firms to revisit all cases where a change in job may have taken place since the review began.

Ron Devlin, the FSA official in charge of the review, said: "Without a doubt, further compensation could be payable to some investors. If that weren't the case we wouldn't be asking firms to revisit these cases."

Joe Chiaro, a pensions review expert at Pricewater-

houseCoopers, said 90 per cent of firms involved would be sent back to the drawing-board. This would add up to a year to the time it will take to complete the review, he said.

"Every company that hasn't done this is going to have to revisit every case. Most of the companies involved in the review have not considered the new-employer scenario.

"The longer the issue is not addressed, the more it will cost."

The industry fears the £1bn compensation bill will rise still further because of the recent plunge in long-term interest

rates – a key factor in deciding how much compensation must be offered.

Insurers are privately expressing anger at the way the issue has been handled by financial regulators. They believe the situation should have been clarified much earlier.

Derek Adams, who heads a forum for project managers working on the review, said: "The real difficulty is that few companies are going to have records of job changes. So you'll have the nonsense of phoning people up and asking if they have changed jobs recently.

"This whole thing has been

a nightmare from start to finish."

The pension mis-selling review, which began nearly four years ago, has been dogged by delay. More than 2 million people, including many nurses, teachers and local government staff, were wrongly advised between 1987 and 1994 to leave employers' pension schemes in favour of a personal pension.

After the election the Government stepped up the pressure on financial services firms which had mis-sold pensions to speed up compensation.

Companies which have mis-sold personal pensions are required to compensate victims for any reasonably foreseeable loss caused.

Recently MPs on the Treasury select committee said the pay of sales staff at financial service firms depended too heavily on commissions. In a report published last month they urged the Financial Services Authority, the City regulator, to develop guidance so that excessive dependence on commission-based selling can be reduced.

The pension review is now due to go into its next phase, compensating younger victims of mis-selling whose cases were deemed less urgent.

Hague's 'treachery' as Tory war intensifies

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

will allow 91 hereditary peers to remain in the Lords until long-term reforms are brought in.

"There can be no question of it not going ahead unless people behave with even greater stupidity than they have up until now," Lord St John told the BBC's *On the Record* programme.

Michael Ancram, the Tory party chairman, said Lord Cranborne's deal could not be accepted because it implied dropping opposition to Government Bills. But there is now growing evidence that Tory peers, behind their new leader Lord Strathclyde, will ignore Mr Hague and support the deal when it is moved as an amendment to the Lords Reform Bill early in the new year.

Lord Fraser, who resigned last week out of loyalty to Lord Cranborne, told *The Independent* last night that he had no objection to his former boss, Viscount Cranborne, after Mr Hague sacked the Tory peer for negotiating the Tory peer behind his back.

Lord Fraser, who resigned last week out of loyalty to Lord Cranborne, told *The Independent* last night that he had no objection to his former boss, Viscount Cranborne, after Mr Hague sacked the Tory peer for negotiating the Tory peer behind his back.

He was dismayed by attempts to justify the sacking by weekend reports that after seeing Mr Blair at Downing Street, Lord Cranborne met Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's chief spin doctor, last Monday to discuss the presentation of the deal.

"It's like saying he supplied

"I'm the devil. He's not a friend of mine, but Alastair Campbell is not the devil incarnate," said Lord Fraser. "I am not interested in who Lord Cranborne was negotiating with. The fact is he got a good deal."

Lord Fraser and other Tory peers believe the attacks on Lord Cranborne were intended to undermine the deal.

But Tory peers made it plain to Mr Hague yesterday that their party leader holds no sway with them. Lord St John of Fawsley, the former Tory leader of the Commons, and Lord Alexander of Weeden both put pressure on Mr Hague to only accept the deal which

The Government had hoped to bring the Bill into the Commons before Christmas, but Mr Blair has been advised that it needs redrafting to make sure the amendment is in order when it is tabled by Lord Weatherill, the former Tory speaker and chairman of the crossbench peers in the Lords.

Downing Street sources disclosed that the Government is now seeking to create an extra 55 life peers – double the number originally planned – to compensate Labour for the new deal in which 91 of the hereditary peers would be allowed to keep their seats. "We have done the calculations and reckon that to keep roughly in line with the Tories, we would need an extra 55 life peers," said a source.

The move could open Mr Blair to accusations of flooding the Lords with new life peers, but the sources said that even with the extra peers the Government would still not command a majority in the Lords.



Thai performers at the opening ceremony of the 13th Asian Games in Bangkok yesterday. Some 6,000 athletes from 43 nations will take part in the games Andrew Wong

Gulf lobbyist and Cook aide run MPs' group

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

late Eighties, Mr Al Hassan lobbied for Saddam Hussein.

On their return, the MPs received gifts of watches via Mr Purchase and were told it would be discourteous to return them.

Mr Al Hassan, a Palestinian, is administrator of the All-Party Bahrain Group, whose secretary is Mr Purchase. In 1983 he was dismissed from a job with the Arab League in London after £15,500 went missing. He now runs the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, which works in this country on behalf of the Bahrain government.

One MP described Mr Al

Hassan as being "like Ian Greer without the laughs ... I am astonished that Robin Cook is allowing his PPS to

fraternise with him". The MPs who went to Bahrain with Mr Purchase were Labour colleagues Lawrence Cunliffe, Lindsay Hoyle, Ashok Kumar, Dan Norden, Andy Lowe, and Claire Ward. The Tory MP Nigel Evans and Liberal Democrat Nigel Jones also went.

Mr Al Hassan said he had been wrongly dismissed by the Arab League and was the victim of a "political conspiracy". He said there was no shame in having lobbied for Iraq during the Eighties.

Mr Purchase said Bahrain had made immense steps in improving human rights and Mr Al Hassan's past was irrelevant. Torture in Bahrain, page 3



Ken Purchase: Concern

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John and Yoko joined in bed by Chris Evans

BY MEG CARTER AND
KATHY MARKS

Dead celebrities can command big bucks, as advertisers are discovering, and the latest digital technology is enabling them to cash in as never before. In the One2One ad, DJ Chris

Evans is taken back to Lennon's famous peace protest in Amsterdam when he spent a week in bed with Yoko Ono.

In the US, dead people are particularly sought after to promote products. One licensing agent recently acquired the commercial exploitation rights

to Marilyn Monroe at auction for \$7m (£4.3m) a year.

Previous One2One ads have featured deceased celebrities including Elvis Presley and Martin Luther King.

Blending old and new footage is nothing new. But new technology means dead personalities

can now interact seamlessly with or even endorse products developed long after their death and it is raising calls for limits on how far advertisers should be allowed.

Research to be published this week shows that 90 per cent of the public want the law

changed to force advertisers to obtain permission from surviving family members.

In the US, advertisers eager to use a dead celebrity must first secure a licence from those managing the estate – but there is no such requirement in the UK.

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Lockie bombing
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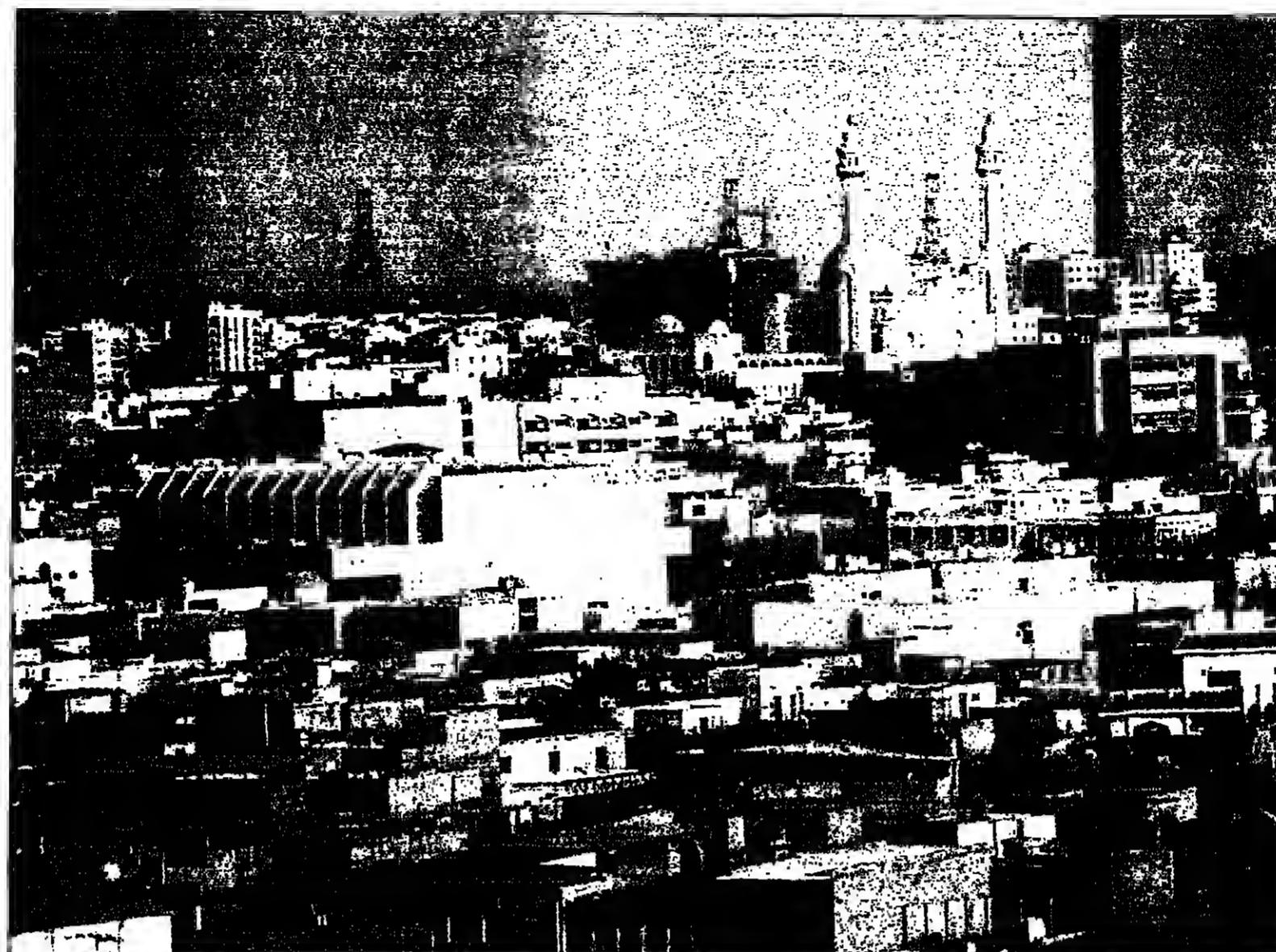
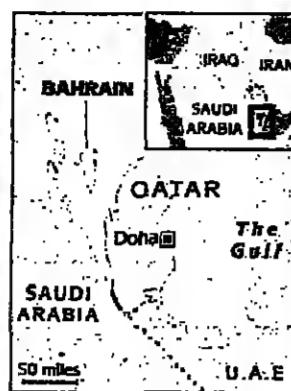
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Strange ethics that makes friends with a state that tortures children



MINISTERS have maintained close contact with their counterparts in Bahrain despite the country's record of torture and extra-judicial killings.

The warm relations between Britain and the Gulf state raise fresh questions about the new "ethical dimension" which Robin Cook has introduced into Britain's foreign policy.

Defence ministers meet regularly through a body called the Bahrain British Defence Committee. Britain has 85 defence staff based in Bahrain and members of the country's armed forces are invited to defence colleges in this country for training.

Bahrain was among a number of countries whose governments were invited to the Farnborough arms fair this year. In the 12 months after Labour won last year's general election, 24 export licences were granted for weapons to Bahrain. Exactly what has been sent is not clear but categories of arms approved for sale include the groups which cover small arms, armoured vehicles and surveillance systems.

A European Parliament resolution has called on EU member states to "refrain from supplying arms or security equipment to the Government of Bahrain".

The country, which is a former British colony, has maintained close links with the UK in many ways. For years, the head of security in Bahrain was a Scot, Ian Henderson, who was responsible for prison. He now has retired and another British ex-serviceman, Colonel Thomas Bryan, has

taken his place. The Minister of the Interior recently appointed a British solicitor, David Jupp, as his legal adviser on human rights issues.

If Nato had gone ahead with bombing raids on Iraq this autumn, British Tornados would have taken off from an air base in Bahrain, where they are stationed.

The Foreign Office minister with responsibility for the Middle East, Derek Fatchett, told the House of Commons last year that campaigners for democracy in Bahrain were "moderate people with a moderate set of demands". He also raised the issue of human rights in meetings with the Bahraini ambassador and other senior figures.

However, close links which existed under the Conservative government still continue. As we report on page one today, a lobbyist, Omar Al Hassan, now administers the All-Party Bahrain Group in the House of Commons and recently took nine MPs there on a trip.

Although there have been some violent terrorist attacks in Bahrain, most pro-democracy campaigners say they would not condone such acts. They want a restoration of the country's partially elected assembly, which was dissolved in 1975, but a petition signed by 25,000 people has brought little change.

Bahrain has signed the UN Convention Against Torture. But brutal treatment is still used to extract confessions from suspected dissidents. The

US state department has estimated that in 1996 more than 3,000 people were detained, but only 117 were convicted. Some 1,500 of them were still in detention at the end of the year.

Many of those held are children - for example two 12-year-old boys were arrested, beaten up and released in September this year. Their parents were not told where they were.

In July a 22-year-old, Nooh Khalil Abdulla al-Nooh, was arrested. Two days later his mutilated body was handed back to his family, and he was buried

next to Saeed al-Iskafi, who suffered the same fate three years earlier.

Human rights abuses in Bahrain have been documented by Amnesty International, the US State Department, the Red Cross and the Human Rights Watch group.

Mr Al Hassan, the lobbyist for Bahrain who runs the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, said: "Deaths in four years was no worse than the records of Britain, Ireland or the United States."

"They were really killed by

terrorists. They do everything against their country. They are co-operating with extremists in Iran and other places," he said.

A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement said: "Britain's close relations with Bahrain should be used to apply pressure."

"So far we have seen some good statements from the Foreign Office and especially Derek Fatchett, but apart from that no tangible action has been recorded," he said.

Earlier this year Bahrain's ambassador to the UK, Abdul

Aziz Mubarak al Khalifa, engaged the British lobbyist Sir Tim Bell to co-ordinate protests to the Labour government after it granted asylum to three Bahraini dissidents.

In a memo to the ambassador, Sir Tim said the Foreign Office was "acutely embarrassed" by the Home Office decision but could do little about it.

He suggested the Bahrainis should use all their contacts to seek meetings with influential figures, including the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and the Downing Street advisers Roger Liddle and John Holmes.

While the decision could not be reversed, the Government should be told how Bahrain had responded to Britain's more ethical foreign policy by opening up dialogue with organisations including the Red Cross and Amnesty International.

A new, more open approach had also included the organisation of fact-finding trips to Bahrain by British MPs "which have been positively received by all involved", the memo said.

DETAINED BY STATE

Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri, an elected member of Bahrain's dissolved national assembly and informal head of the country's most broadly based opposition group, the Bahrain Freedom Movement, has been imprisoned without charge since January 1996. A government official said there was proof his group was involved in a bombing, but three years later he has not been formally accused of any crime. His family have been allowed just a few brief visits.

Maryam As'ldi al-Arabi, aged 20, was arrested last month with two other women, Salwa Hassan Halid and Hanan Salman Halid, both 30. The women have been held incommunicado since security forces ransacked their houses.

Salwa Hassan Halid is reported by Amnesty International to have been beaten on the soles of her feet and suspended by her limbs. It is thought that the women and other detainees may have been used as "hostages" for relatives sought by the authorities.

Muhammad Ali Muhammad-ikri, now 17, was arrested for the third time last month. His family has been denied access and Amnesty International fears he may be suffering torture and abuse. The teenager was first taken in at the age of 14, accused of throwing a petrol bomb. He was sentenced to 10 years, which was overturned. In February he was arrested again, and released a month later.

FRAN ABRAHAMS

Globe's Cleopatra will be artistic director in drag

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

MARK RYLANCE, the artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe, is to cast himself as Cleopatra as the highlight of the theatre's summer season.

The 37-year-old actor will wear handmade costumes to play the role - the first time in living memory a mature male has played it for an internationally famous company.

Mr Rylance's decision to play the passionate Egyptian queen will have considerable reverberations in theatrical and scholarly circles. It will also be seized upon with differing levels of approval by actors and actresses in Britain.

Leading actresses may be furious if they are being deprived of one of Shakespeare's greatest roles, while a number of actors will see Mr Rylance's initiative as a sign that attitudes to gender on the stage may be undergoing a significant change.

The Royal Shakespeare Company actor Antony Sher, 49, says he is also keen to play Cleopatra, but was told by RSC artistic director Adrian Noble



Mark Rylance as Henry V this summer. Geraint Lewis

that he would be lynched by a dozen leading actresses if he was allowed to do so. "Cleopatra used to be played by a chap," said Mr Sher, "and it is a fantastic role."

Mr Rylance, who is not officially announcing the Globe 1999 season until February when the box office opens, refused to comment. But a close associate said: "Mark will certainly be dressed up as a woman and the costume will be authentic, made by hand. It's a part he has always wanted to play. But it will be difficult to find the right Antony. He is going to

have to be the right kind of macho. They are such a passionate couple."

"But Mark has a sensitivity about him that will help, and a voice that is not very low."

A spokeswoman for the Globe said: "It is part of the policy of the Globe that we explore original playing practices."

However, while it is often cited that males played females on the stage in Shakespeare's time, they were boys, not men - as in the Globe's Henry V this summer. And those were not large roles. To have a 37-year-old man play Cleopatra is a

"extremely passionate".



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MIS-LEADING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN



Judith Anderson
A piece of cross-dressing too far. The Hollywood actress stretched audience tolerance beyond the limit when she played Hamlet on stage in 1971 at the age of 73. In New York she was booed off.

Sarah Bernhardt
Played Hamlet in West End in 1899 at the age of 55. Audiences sat in silence but critic Max Beerbohm said he refrained from laughing only out of concern for "the national reputation for good manners".

Kathryn Hunter
Played King Lear to acclaim last year, saying it was a fantasy fulfilled. "I've had this wish since I was 13 to play Lear ... when I heard my teacher read the play, she had this vast bosom heaving with emotion."

Adrian Lester
The 6ft actor, now in the film *Primrose Colors*, played Rosalind in Cheek by Jowl's all male *As You Like It* in 1995. The late critic Jack Tinker enthused about his transformation into a "capricious schoolgirl".

Fiona Shaw
Award-winning Irish-born actress played Richard II with great success at the National in 1995, but said she would never play character of opposite sex where a passionate relationship was involved.

Frances de la Tour
Soon to play Cleopatra, she took on Hamlet in 1979, but not to explore her male side. "I just wanted to play the universal person, a young, vulnerable, screwed-up rebel without a cause."

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Intel Inside

Pan Am two handed over 'in fortnight'

BY RUPERT CORNWELL
AND KIM SENGUPTA

BRITAIN, THE US and relatives of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing were last night clinging to hopes that the two Libyan suspects could yet be handed over before the 10th anniversary of the bombing in a fortnight's time, despite this weekend's inconclusive trip to Libya by Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General.

Speaking after a 90-minute meeting with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in the Libyan desert near Sirte, Mr Annan praised the Libyans as "serious" in wanting to settle the affair, and predicted they might do so "in the not too distant future". Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, took a similar line after hearing a report of the meeting from Mr Annan, proclaiming he felt "qualified optimism" about the outcome of the weekend mission.

Mr Cook also indicated that a deal was possible. The Libyan Foreign Minister, Omar al-Montasser, said following talks with Mr Annan: "I am sure that the efforts of the Secretary-General will show positive results very soon."

Even so, the failure finally to secure the handing over of Abdel Basset Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah, the two Libyan intelligence operatives accused of planting the bomb aboard Pan Am Flight 103, has been a disappointment - especially for Mr Annan who went to Libya only after an assurance he would leave with a cast iron agreement the two men would be surrendered to face justice in a court in The Hague.



Abdel Basset Megrahi (left) and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah, accused of planting the bomb on Pan Am Flight 103

Dr Jim Swire, spokesman for the British families who lost relatives at Lockerbie, said he was delighted Mr Annan and Colonel Gaddafi had met, adding that, some of the Libyan complaints over the issue were justified. He continued: "The main thing is that the two men did meet because Gaddafi is busy saying he fears a trick and that he also feels that his country has been left out of negotiations about the trial, which is true, they have. What he needs, I think, is reassurance that this really is an offer of a fair trial and I can't think of anyone better than Kofi Annan to give that reassurance."

Once again, Colonel Gaddafi's mind has proved unreadable, despite Tripoli's agreement in principle to last summer's Anglo-American offer of a trial in a third country under Scottish law, and with Scottish judges.

The Foreign Secretary also said he hoped the trial, at a specially built courtroom, could begin on 21 December, the 10th anniversary of the bombing. Despite the setback, London

The matter could be re-

covered by next Sunday, after this week's meeting of Libya's General People's Congress, or parliament. According to UN sources, Mr Montasser promised Mr Annan he would ask the Congress to approve the deal during its five-day session which starts tomorrow. Dr Swire said he was still hopeful of a solution "within weeks".

Despite the setback, London

and Washington are still convinced Tripoli wants to clinch a deal, and thus end the sanctions which have largely isolated Col Gadaffi's country. Optimists believe that the latest delay is merely to save the Libyan leader from the perceived humiliation of a direct personal climbdown. In fact the People's Congress always decides in accordance with its wishes.

After his face-to-face talks with Col Gadaffi, Mr Annan was typically unfappable. "I think it was a positive development," he said of the meeting. "But in all these things you have to wait for others to do what they have to do and for you to have something concrete before you can claim victory."

In Washington, the State Department spokesman, James

Foley, said the United States was "disappointed" that Libya had not complied with UN Security Council resolutions. He said: "Compliance means the turnover of the two suspects for trial. It's been almost ten years since the Pan Am 103 tragedy. This has gone on too long."

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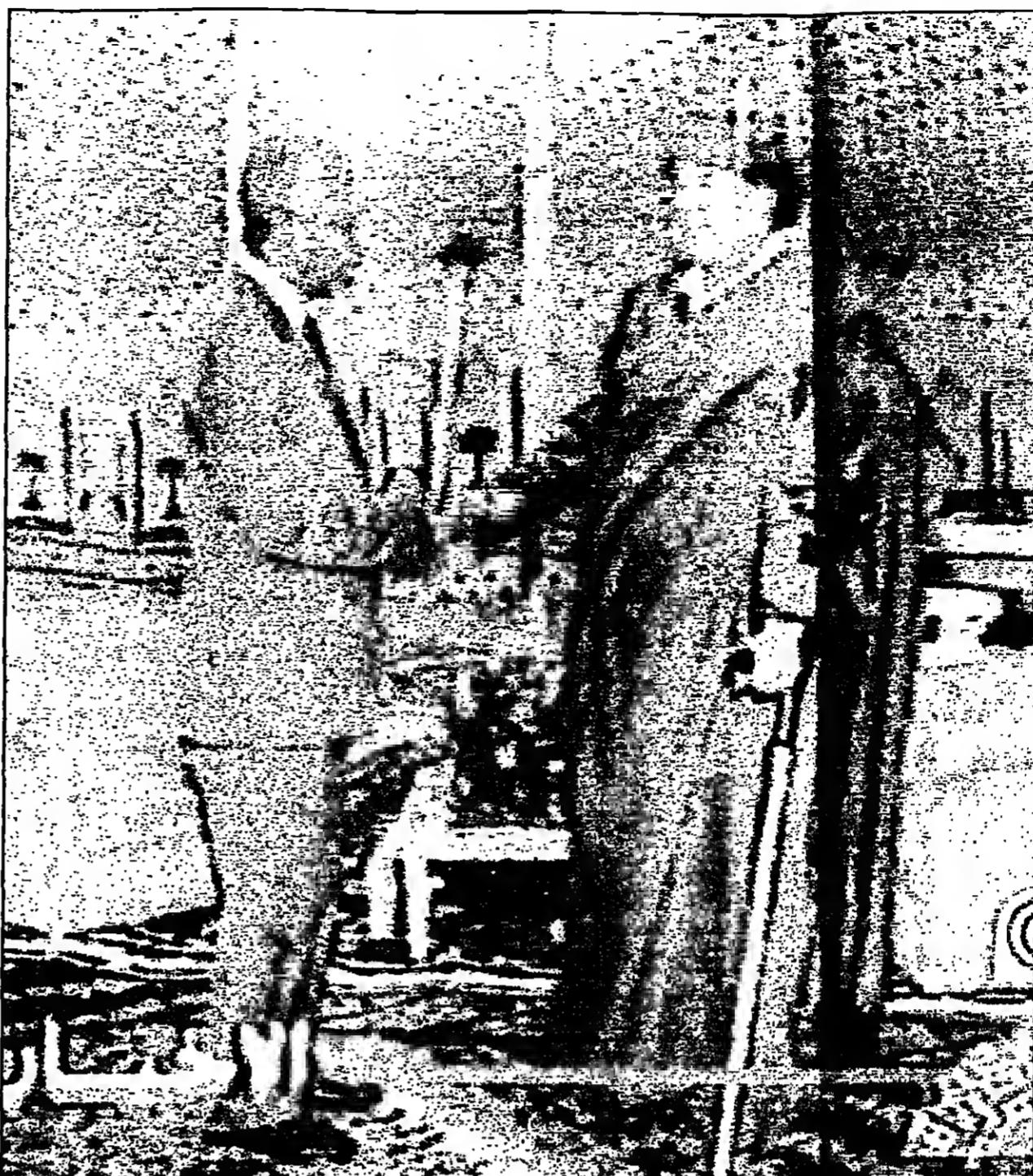
The OFT is bringing a case through the Restrictive Practices Court against the Football League over its granting of exclusive rights to Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB to televise Premier League matches. Similar action may be taken in respect of rugby.

Mr Murdoch also has the exclusive rights to televise all English club rugby matches following a £7.5m deal signed in 1995.

The agreement with the RFU over Twickenham internationals almost led to England being thrown out of the Five Nations championship by the other countries involved - Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France.

The dispute was settled after England agreed to give the other nations a share of its income from BSkyB.

Earlier this year the Rugby Football League was ordered by the Restrictive Practices Court to notify the OFT in advance of any exclusive agreements it makes in respect of ticket sales and hotel and travel arrangements for matches.



Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General (left), and Muammar Gaddafi meeting in the Libyan desert CNN

Government ditches care in the community

THE GOVERNMENT reverses its policy of care in the community tomorrow, taking thousands of mentally ill people off the streets and forcing them to comply with treatment.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, will publish the long-awaited White Paper on mental health designed to improve supervision of those with mental health problems and make 24-hour care available. It is believed he will announce funding of £185m from social services and £470m from

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

the health service to cover the plans. Key reforms include more "acute" and "secure" beds in psychiatric hospitals, more trained staff and the introduction of a 24-hour helpline.

One of the more controversial plans gives doctors the power to force patients who refuse to comply with treatment to be re-admitted to hospital.

The Government also wants to change legislation so that it

covers those with untreatable personality disorders. The Mental Health Act only covers those with "treatable" conditions. This would cover people like Michael Stine, convicted of the murders of Lin and Megan Russell, who suffered from a psychopathic disorder.

In July when Mr Dobson announced reform of the Act, he promised a "root and branch" review because the Act was "based on the needs and therapies of a bygone age". While pledging this did not mean a re-

turn to locking people up in long-stay institutions, he added that too many people had been left "wandering the streets".

The proposals signal an end to the care in the community policy, which has been criticised after a succession of high-profile inquiries, such as into the killing of Jonathan Zito by Christopher Clunis, a paranoid schizophrenic, at a London underground station in 1992.

Since 1980, 50,000 psychiatric beds have been closed, leaving many to live in hostels and Washington are still convinced Tripoli wants to clinch a deal, and thus end the sanctions which have largely isolated Col Gadaffi's country. Optimists believe that the latest delay is merely to save the Libyan leader from the perceived humiliation of a direct personal climbdown. In fact the People's Congress always decides in accordance with its wishes.

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IN BRIEF

Holiday blast victims named

TWO BRITISH men injured seriously in a gas explosion in a Tenerife holiday apartment on Saturday were named yesterday as Melbourne David Thomas, 51, and Eric Stevens, 41, both from the Manchester area. They both suffered burns to 80 to 90 per cent of their bodies.

Firms face skills shortage

THE SHORTAGE of skilled staff is getting worse, according to a survey of 373 organisations by the recruitment firm Reed Personnel Services. Among the skilled workers in demand are computer experts, finance professionals, accountants and engineers.

Man dies after parachute fails

A MAN died when his parachute failed to open properly during a jump and he crashed into a field yesterday. The unnamed 29-year-old from the West Midlands, plunged to the ground during the jump with the North London Parachute Club in March, Cambridgeshire.

Ballooning bid across the Andes

POLAR EXPLORER David Hempleman-Adams hopes for lift-off today in his delayed pioneer bid to cross the Andes in a balloon. Mr Hempleman-Adams, 42, from near Bath, has been grounded since Wednesday. He plans two 120-mile flights, 20-30,000 ft above the South American range.

Strewn mate, it's cockney

AUSTRALIANS ARE borrowing cockney rhyming slang. Visiting Britons can expect to hear Sydney referred to as "steak and kidney", while the missus (wife) becomes "cheese and kisses". The phrases are detailed in the new Australian Phrasebook, from Lonely Planet.

Two share lottery jackpot

TWO TICKET holders won £3,627,226 each after sharing Saturday's £7.2m National Lottery jackpot. The winning numbers were 4, 7, 23, 26, 27, and 35. The bonus number was 28.

JOHN WALSH

There is only one thing worse than being shafted by the media; being completely ignored by it

IN THE MONDAY REVIEW PAGE 5

Rugby deals worry OFT

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

THE OFFICE of Fair Trading is considering launching an investigation into rugby amid concern over the way rights to televise the game and sell tickets are handled.

The investigation is likely to encompass both rugby union and rugby league, which have been heavily commercialised over the last few years following the success of World Cup tournaments and the growth in pay television coverage.

The director general of Fair Trading, John Bridgeman, himself a keen rugby union fan, is known to be concerned at the lack of competition in the auctioning of television rights.

There is also concern over the granting of exclusive rights to sports agents to sell tickets and hospitality packages to international matches and the way merchandise is sold within rugby grounds.

Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB has a stranglehold on the televising of both sports. BSkyB signed an exclusive deal worth £27.5m with the Rugby Football Union in 1996 allowing it to screen all England's home matches at Twickenham, with the exception of World Cup games, for the next five years.

Rugby league's Superleague meanwhile agreed an exclusive £89m, five-year deal with BSkyB in 1995. BSkyB subsequently paid a further £50m to extend the agreement until 2003. There are 12 teams in the Superleague but this will rise to 14 next season.

The OFT is bringing a case through the Restrictive Practices Court against the Football League over its granting of exclusive rights to Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB to televise Premier League matches. Similar action may be taken in respect of rugby.

Mr Murdoch also has the exclusive rights to televise all English club rugby matches following a £7.5m deal signed in 1995.

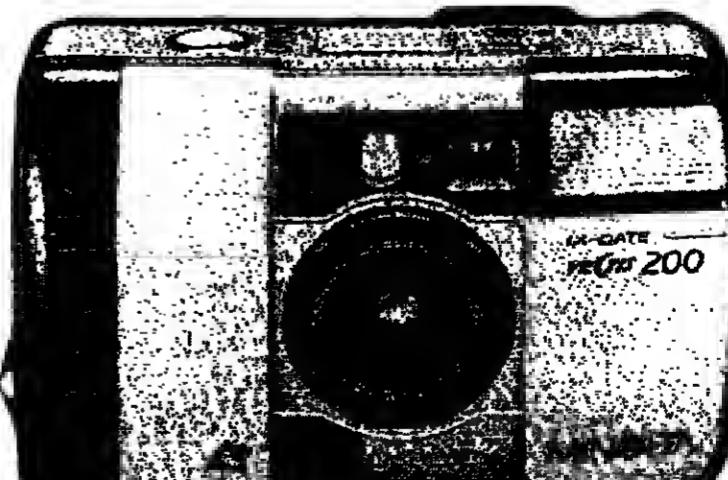
The agreement with the RFU over Twickenham internationals almost led to England being thrown out of the Five Nations championship by the other countries involved - Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France.

The dispute was settled after England agreed to give the other nations a share of its income from BSkyB.

Earlier this year the Rugby Football League was ordered by the Restrictive Practices Court to notify the OFT in advance of any exclusive agreements it makes in respect of ticket sales and hotel and travel arrangements for matches.

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Women shun elite police jobs

WOMEN POLICE officers are making more crime-beating arrests than their male counterparts but are not joining elite squads, according to new research.

To the consternation of senior officers, policewomen are not applying for posts in firearms groups, marine units and fast vehicle response teams because they are repelled by their "entrenched culture of masculinity".

The findings come in the biggest-ever study of the role of women in British policing, which will force chief constables into a major re-think of their equal opportunities policies.

The research reveals that women officers working in a high-crime area of Newcastle upon Tyne arrested on average more dangerous house-breakers, car thieves and joy-riders than male officers.

The study's author, Louise Westmarland, a lecturer in criminology at the University of Teesside, said her findings dispelled the myth that women were allocated to quiet beats.

She said: "The men were getting more arrests for 'non-crimes' like not having a tax-disc but the women were getting more of what are known in police circles as a 'good pinch', the aggravated burglars and car thieves."

Dr Westmarland's three-year publicly-funded study involved a year spent shadowing officers in the Northumbria and Durham forces.

She found that the deep-rooted sexism, for which the police service has long been criticised, had been replaced by more subtle limitations on the career-paths of women.

Because of a scarcity of resources and the use of computers in allocating officers to jobs, uniformed women officers are likely to be given the same patrolling tasks as men.

But the opportunities for promotion are still marked out in terms of gender. While women officers were happy to further their careers by applying for jobs in the Child and Family Protection unit, or more office-based sections like the fraud squad or the training de-

partment, the "guns, cars and horses" were still seen as a male domain, said Dr Westmarland.

"It's not the old story of a sexist conspiracy," she said. "In actual fact the reverse is true. The managers would love to see more women in these posts but the current culture in these units is attractive to men and unattractive to women."

She explained that the modern police ethos of "service" instead of "force" had ushered in a feminisation of the police with more emphasis on community care and "less on breaking down doors".

The process had driven some male officers to seek out masculine havens where they could practise traditional male pursuits of shooting, driving and chasing.

She said: "These men don't have to cope with the force being more feminised. They can continue to exist in an exclusively male enclave."

Dr Westmarland, whose research will be published in the new year, said only radical measures to break up this entrenched culture would encourage women into the specialist branches of work.

Her report states that females comprised only 3% of Northumbria's specialist units although they made up 14% of the force. Only one of the 12 firearms officers was a woman and only three of the 160 traffic officers.

The only armed female officer was described by colleagues as "just like one of the lads". Others were concerned by the idea of a female boss. One constable said: "What you don't need is someone who is supposed to be in charge of a firearms incident, way out of her depth, not knowing what to do, her voice going higher and higher, about to burst into tears - it's putting everyone at risk."

Traffic officers recounted a story of a female officer - "eight and a half stone in her nylons" - who handcuffed an 18-stone miner, only to be picked up and carried off. She tried to use Lincolnshire



Inspector Cydema Fleming was subjected to a 'vendetta' by male colleagues and has won her industrial tribunal case

Page One

'They tried to ruin my reputation'

CYDENA FLEMING took only

BY IAN BURRELL

eight years to rise through the ranks from constable to inspector due to what her promotion board described as her "exceptional level of performance".

But when she was placed in charge of Gainsborough police station she found herself the subject of deep resentment.

Anonymous telephone calls were made to her, superiors claiming that she was having affairs with her colleagues. Social services were even informed that Insp Fleming was neglecting her two children.

She tried to use Lincolnshire

police's grievance procedure to register her distress at what she later described as "dripping poison" but was rebuffed.

Insp Fleming wrote in her pocket book: "I strongly believe there is a positive attempt to discredit me and ruin my reputation." According to her barrister, Robin Allen QC, her colleagues were "determined to be rid of her".

He said: "One flirted with her, another was obsessed. She received abuse from other sergeants and a great deal of animosity. It takes quite a

remarkable person to survive the animosity and ostracism she faced."

Insp Fleming, 40, lodged a claim for sex discrimination and placed a voice-activated tape recorder in her locker room to gather evidence of the harassment. But when the recorder was discovered, her superiors decided that she was not the victim but the culprit.

She was suspended on the grounds of "oppressive behaviour".

Insp Fleming was also accused of custody offenses, making false entries in her pocket books and even breaking into

her husband's flat. In February this year, an industrial tribunal ruled that she had been subjected to a vendetta by male colleagues.

She has been paid compensation and offered reinstatement but has taken up a post with Humberside police, which was called in to conduct a Police Complaints Authority investigation into her treatment and promptly offered her a job.

The difficulties faced by Insp Fleming are illustrative of recent warnings in Policing Today magazine by senior women officers who have spoken

out against the discrimination suffered by females who try to rise through the ranks. Elizabeth Neville, Chief Constable of Wiltshire, said there remained a widespread fear that pregnancy would undermine a woman's promotion chances.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Judy Davison, of the City of London Police, was specifically concerned by the lack of women working in the traffic or armed response sections. "Family responsibilities, encouragement, personal choice and childcare may all be inhibiting factors," she said.

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

A POWERFUL cross-party committee of MPs will this week raise serious concerns over the level of safety on Britain's railways. The report by the Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and the Regions comes as concern mounts over safety and vandalism of the track network.

The committee took evidence over the summer from Railtrack and the companies that carry out maintenance work, as well as the British Transport Police, the Health and Safety Executive and experts on risk management.

The report will be published on Wednesday, the day before Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Railways produces its annual report for the period that includes the Southall rail crash.

The HMRI report will show that the number of serious accidents is still down but that the number of people killed rose because of Southall, in which seven people died and 147 were injured. Great Western Trains and the train driver have been charged with manslaughter.

The industry is also preparing for the 10th anniversary on Saturday of the Clapham train crash, in which 35 people died. Faulty signalling was blamed for the accident in which a commuter train ran into the back of another train.

An official accident report made 93 recommendations, including the provision within five years across the network of automatic train protection (ATP), an in-cab computer system which automatically prevents trains going through danger signals. But plans to introduce ATP were abandoned when it was deemed too expensive.

There is growing concern over the levels of vandalism on the railway. A fortnight ago, a Euston to Inverness sleeper train hit two stolen vans on the track near Edinburgh.

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Tories face shaming on tobacco links

HEALTH MINISTERS are prepared to use a Labour Party dossier on the Tories' links with the tobacco industry to back its plans this week for a ban on tobacco advertising.

Senior Whitehall sources have told *The Independent* that they will attack prominent Conservatives for their close links with tobacco companies if the Tories try to oppose the proposals which Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, will outline in a White Paper.

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government is implementing an EU directive banning tobacco advertising on poster sites by 2000, a year ahead of the maximum allowed by the European agreement.

But it is expected that some Tory MPs will oppose Britain replacing the voluntary code with a compulsory ban.

Although ministers are vulnerable over allowing spon-

sorship of Formula One racing by tobacco companies to continue until 2000, the Government is prepared to use the Labour dossier which names Kenneth Clarke, the former Chancellor, as the most prominent Tory link with the tobacco industry.

Mr Clarke, a former health secretary, is the deputy chairman of British American Tobacco, a post thought to pay at least £75,000 a year.

The leading spokesman for

the Tobacco Manufacturers Association is John Carlisle, the former outspoken right-wing Tory MP.

The dossier claims that the Tories received donations totalling £100,000 before the 1992 general election from Rothmans. More discreet payments have been made including £4,000 towards the right wing think-tank, the Centre for Policy Studies, by BAT Industries.

Baroness Thatcher is also a consultant to Philip Morris, manufacturer of Marlboro. Ian Greer Associates, the now defunct lobbying company which crashed after being implicated in the allegations of Tory cash-for-questions, also lobbied for Skol Bandits before they were banned in this country.

The Conservatives were also handed key advertising posters sites reserved for the tobacco industry before the 1992 election campaign.

The Tories have said they will respond to curbs on ad-

vertising on their merits, but the party's former spokesman on health, John Maples, said an EU-wide ban on all forms of tobacco advertising was "an unnecessary and potentially unworkable piece of legislation".

Mr Dobson and Tessa Jowell, the Public Health minister, will also accuse the tobacco industry of targeting young people with their campaigns.

The measures will be aimed particularly at those on low incomes, who have proved resistant to health warnings about the dangers of smoking. Ministers feared making

nicotine gum and patches generally available on prescription would be too expensive. Curbs on smoking in the workplace will be included in the package. Employees will be told they could be covered by the health and safety at work acts to stop smoking in small offices.

There will be no ban on smoking in pubs and restaurants, but owners will be urged to provide more smoke-free zones.

New Labour pressure group modernises itself out of business

BY JOHN RENTOU



Tony Blair (left), then trade spokesman, with protesting packers in 1983

the last Labour government and now Environment minister, Peter Hain, then a radical Bennite activist, now a Welsh Office minister. Even Ms Booth, in a discreet assertion of her right to a political mind of her own, sent word that she was sorry she could not be there.

Mr Lucas, now director of the New Labour lobbying company Lucas Lawson Mendelsohn, listed the group's achievements: "The LCC has run its course. Tony Blair is the most overtly modernising leader Labour has ever had and his government has set about the most radical constitutional change for a century. Labour is now more representative of its members and voters. Trotskyism has been reduced to a tiny and ineffective rump within the party."

There were some doubts expressed. Paul Thompson, a professor at Edinburgh University and editor of the LCC journal *Renewal*, which is continuing, said the success of hard-left candidates in this year's ballot of party members for the National Executive was "really depressing". The LCC had paid the price for failing to oppose the party machine's "centralising tendencies". The fight within the Labour Party against the hard left would have to be carried on by new organisations, he said.

But now it has fulfilled most of its aims and most of its leading members are in positions of power in government and industry and as lobbyists. The roll-call of apologies for absence at Saturday's meeting was like an archaeological dig through the layers of left-wing Labour factions over the past two decades. Barbara Castle, sacked from Jim Callaghan's Cabinet in 1976; Michael Meacher, a Bennite minister in

block vote and bring in the one-member, one-vote system for choosing MPs.

But now it has fulfilled most of its aims and most of its leading members are in positions of power in government and industry and as lobbyists. The roll-call of apologies for absence at Saturday's meeting was like an archaeological dig through the layers of left-wing Labour factions over the past two decades. Barbara Castle, sacked from Jim Callaghan's Cabinet in 1976; Michael Meacher, a Bennite minister in



Harriet Harman (left), who was on the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, with striking nurses in London in 1988

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MPs prepare for fight over trade union rights

A SHOT will be fired across Peter Mandelson's bows this week by Labour MPs who fear the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry may further weaken the Government's commitment to giving trade unions the right to negotiate for their members.

A Cabinet committee is expected this week to agree the final detail of the controversial Fairness at Work Bill included in the Queen's Speech.

Mr Mandelson has gone a long way to meeting the demands of unions against the wishes of employers' organisations, but others of the back-bench trade union committee of Labour MPs who met Mr Mandelson last week are planning to table a Commons motion seeking further concessions.

Unions will be expected to meet a 50 per cent threshold in ballots before demanding recognition by employers and Mr Mandelson has dropped a proposal requiring those taking part in ballots to have been members of unions for at least three months. But the MPs

are unhappy that the Central Arbitration Committee will be given wide powers under Mr Mandelson's Bill to assess claims for automatic bargaining rights. They want its terms of reference to be tightly limited by the Bill.

"There is a lot of concern about the flexibility which Mr Mandelson is proposing," said a senior member of the Labour backbench group.

More than 70 MPs attended a meeting of Labour's back-bench trade union committee to hear John Monks, the general secretary of the TUC, express his concern at the compromise being worked out by Mr Mandelson over the fair employment legislation.

John Monks was given a good reception, but Peter Mandelson was not, "said one senior Labour backbencher. "There is going to be a row over this."

The rumbles of backbench discontent emerged after Mr Mandelson sought to reassure the MPs that the principles



Mandelson: Compromise

underpinning the White Paper on trade union recognition were being protected. But many MPs emerged from the meeting seeking stronger assurances that the Secretary of State is not ready to bow too much to the bosses.

Gerry Sutcliffe, Labour MP for Bradford South and chairman of the group, said the Commons motion which he will be tabling with senior backbench colleagues would welcome the Fairness at Work legislation but would urge the

Cabinet to adhere to the principles in the White Paper on trade union recognition.

The MPs left the meeting with the firm view that many details of the legislation remain to be settled, and a Cabinet battle could be about to begin. They believe that John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, has been given assurances by Tony Blair that he will be involved in the final decisions, which the MPs regard as another reassurance that past pledges will be kept.

In a separate move, Harriet Harman, the former Social Security secretary, will also urge the Government to help fund more generous provisions for parental leave.

In her first moves since being sacked from the Cabinet, she will table a Commons motion today with Chris Patten, the Labour MP and former director of the Low Pay Unit, welcoming government action but making it clear that they want to see more financial help for parents taking leave to care for their children.

Spectre of Hollywood wives kills custody deal with US

MINISTERS HAVE turned down a deal with the United States government over custody cases because of fears that Hollywood wives would be able to appear in the British courts, including legal aid.

The minister for the Lord Chancellor's office, Geoff Hoon, was tempted to go along with the deal, because it would have helped dozens of British families in "tug-of-love" cases in this country.

The sticking-point was a demand that, in return for making it easier for Britons to seek custody for their children in US

lower courts, which can prove expensive.

The cases have included that of Sheehan and Conair Sidwell, who were snatched by their father and taken to America via London and Germany.

Their mother, Kim, tracked them to Orlando and brought them home after a legal battle

that was left with a £6,000 bill.

Scraping routine checks on passports of UK citizens leaving Britain has been blamed for a 58 per cent increase in parental abductions of children from this country to live abroad since 1995.

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New reading plan 'staggeringly good'

Capital patches available on prescriptions are too expensive. Smoking in the workplace will be included in the Employee Benefits Bill. It will be covered by and safety at work smoking in small

There will be no ban on duty and responsibilities will be shared.

The findings are likely to embarrass ministers who plan to release research today proving that their new national literacy strategy is raising standards in reading.

The Scottish study, also funded partly by the Government, suggests that children's progress is much more rapid if different teaching methods than those favoured by ministers are used.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, has laid down teaching methods which schools should use in the daily literacy hour introduced in primary schools this term. The methods are not compulsory, but schools will be reprimanded for not using the techniques if their results do not come up to scratch.

But research from St Andrews University reveals that "analytic phonics", the method recommended for the literacy

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor



Blunkett: Laid down 'less successful' methods

hour, is much less successful in improving reading than "synthetic phonics".

The study, commissioned by Clackmannanshire Council and funded partly by the Scottish Office, involved 300 pupils and 13 classes in eight schools. Researchers Dr Rhona Johnston and Joyce Watson divided them into three groups. The group taught with synthetic phonics rather than methods advocated in the national strategy far outperformed the other groups.

After 16 weeks, children in the former group had reading ages which were, on average, seven months ahead of their chronological ages, while the latter groups had fallen slightly behind their chronological ages. By the end of the first year, the synthetic phonics group was a year ahead of its reading age and 14 months ahead in spelling.

In analytic phonics, children start with a word and break it down into letter sounds - "cat" becomes c-a-t - and they con-

centrate on the initial letters of words. In synthetic phonics, they move much faster - they are taught the 42 letter sounds at six a day in eight days. At the same time, they are taught to identify letters in the initial, middle and final positions in words and to sound and blend words using magnetic letters.

Dr Johnston said: "Synthetic phonics is staggeringly effective. We have been using the methods of the optional litera-

cy strategy in Scotland for three years. Three years ago, we would have said that we were very pleased with it. Now we are saying that you can do much better. The results were best in the most deprived schools and boys benefit just as much as girls."

The project had used the schools' own teachers who received two days' training and had involved no extra resources.

Lorna Spence, head of Deer Park primary school in Clackmannanshire - one of the schools which trialled synthetic phonics - said that the percentage of children reading at or above their chronological ages had risen from under half, to more than 93 per cent. The teacher remained the same.

Her school is in a mining village and nearly a third of the children come from households where no one has a job. Forty-five per cent are on free school meals. She said: "The results were quite astounding."

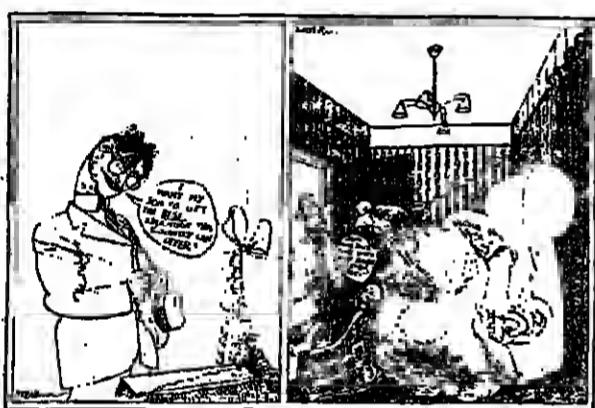
In England, some primary schools use a commercial scheme, Jolly Phonics, which uses similar methods.



The Bo'ness signal box, in West Lothian, won one of six awards for Scotland in the annual railway heritage awards, to be presented by Transport minister, Glenda Jackson, today. It won the award for signalling. Colin McPherson

THE RIGHTS OF EVERY MAN

"The Independent" is publishing daily each of the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, illustrated by Ralph Steadman, to mark its 50th anniversary on 10 December.



Article 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

A pamphlet edition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is published by Waterstone's, price £1. Proceeds to the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

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Tough new rules to speed mortgages

REFORMS AIMED at taking much of the pain out of house buying are to be unveiled by the Government today.

Mortgage lenders will be expected to deal with 80 per cent of applications for loans within two working days under rules proposed by the housing minister, Hilary Armstrong. Buyers will have much more information at the start of transactions, with the onus of carrying out local searches,

BY KIM SENGUPTA

and possibly surveys, being put on vendors before they put properties on the market. This will take care of much of the time-consuming but relatively straightforward work before negotiations take place.

The Government says its plans, put together after a nationwide survey on the angst involved in buying and selling property, will fast-track the

process, make it cheaper, and go some way towards combatting the practice of gazzumping.

The survey showed there was an average eight-week wait between acceptance of an offer and exchange of contracts. At present, in most cases, an offer is agreed before the time and money-consuming processes of a search, getting title deeds and answering legal questions. Almost 25 per cent of deals start to run into diffi-

culties at this stage. Gazzumping, in which the seller pulls out at the last moment in favour of a higher offer, should become less prevalent because of the greater speed in the transaction.

It should also help to limit "gazundering", when a buyer suddenly lowers the offer just before contracts are exchanged.

The issue of whether the vendor should include a survey as part of his or her obligations

is expected to generate controversy. A compromise could be a "log-book" carrying a "service history" of the property.

This is the latest move in a government shake-up of the housing market. Last month plans were announced to overhaul the leasehold system, giving almost 2 million people in leasehold properties the right to buy or manage the freehold of their homes.

A spokesman for Bradford

and Bingley, Britain's second-largest building society, pointed out that mortgage lenders have to depend a lot on third parties for verification of earnings before they can offer a loan.

He added: "On principle, the quicker we can grant the mortgage the better."

The government measure comes after the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) warned that borrowers should take steps to guarantee that

they can pay their mortgages.

The CML, which represents Britain's banks and building societies, said the housing market is unlikely to suffer the boom and bust of previous economic slowdowns, but is likely to be dampened next year by the economic uncertainty. The organisation stated, however, that there will be good news for borrowers in the form of lower interest rates.

A CML official said about the

proposed mortgage reforms: "We are all in favour of expediting the time it takes for the mortgages to be arranged, so we welcome any attempts to do so, but there are many variables, such as having to depend on outside parties."

House prices rose by 3.6 per cent this year. They are expected to go up by 3 per cent in 1999 and 2000, roughly in line with inflation forecasts.



Fashion Café owners, (above left) Naomi Campbell, Elle Macpherson and Claudia Schiffer; and Planet Hollywood proprietors Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone. London Features/Dave Hogan

Linley's diner follows trend of celebrity cafés – and fails

THE CHRISTMAS lights are twinkling, the music is defiantly up-beat and there is even a half-price Screaming Orgasm on offer. But it takes more than cheap cocktails to fill a restaurant, as Viscount Linley, the Queen's nephew, has discovered to his cost.

Deals, Lord Linley's chain of upmarket burger bars, is up for sale, the latest celebrity-backed dining venture to collide with harsh economic reality. Other casualties include the Fashion Café, placed in receivership six weeks ago, and Planet Hollywood, which recently plunged into loss.

Industry analysts are not surprised that Deals is being sold. The market is saturated, they say, and fears of recession are keeping diners at home. The restaurants feeling the pinch most keenly are those

that rely on a glitzy theme, rather than on a reputation for quality food.

Deals was launched amid a blaze of publicity in 1988 by Lord Linley and his cousin, Lord Lichfield, the society photographer. It was to be an "upmarket works canteen", combining smart décor and an eclectic menu – a place to cut business deals, Eighties-style.

The founders' connections meant a glamorous cast of customers initially, including Diana, Princess of Wales, and the actor Jason Donovan. But since 1995 the three-outlet London chain has been in the red.

At lunchtime on Friday, the West End branch was virtually empty, save for a few shopkeepers spooning the froth off their cappuccinos. Two men in pin-

stripes munched morosely on Teriyaki Burgers.

Similarly, poor trade led to the ignominious demise of the Fashion Café, fronted by supermodels Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer and Elle Macpherson, and the travails of Planet Hollywood, the hamburger group owned by Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

There are countless other cautionary tales. Opposite Planet Hollywood in Piccadilly Circus, for instance, is the former site of a sandwich bar opened by the pop singer Gary Glitter in 1994. The Glitter Bar closed after just eight months.

"It will certainly hit; no question off," he said. "We will be seeing business people keeping an eye on the right-hand side of the wine list and directing their guests' attention to the set-meal menu."



Viscount Linley has put his chain of fashionable 'works canteens' up for sale as diners cut back on eating out. Rex

Britain told to give up EU rebate

THE GOVERNMENT was under strong pressure last night to back down over Britain's European budget rebate.

European Union foreign ministers meeting in Brussels made it clear that, whatever Tony Blair says, the unique "discount" – whereby Britain gets

more than £2bn a year off its EU bills – is up for renegotiation.

The message was delivered to Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, at the start of discussions on "Agenda 2000" – the European Commission's plans to reform the European budget.

In the face of calls from Hol-

land and Italy, in particular, to renegotiate the deal won by Margaret Thatcher in 1985, Mr Cook remained defiant.

"It is not going to change," he insisted in Brussels. "Even after the rebate, Britain's net contribution remains higher per head than other countries which are in a better position to pay. It is justified, it is right, we are going to keep it."

That view will be vigorously challenged, not least by Germany, which insists that Britain still gets a preferential deal, it too will be demanding a rebate.

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MILLENNIUM BUG WATCH



JEWISH SOLDIERS last week arrested Jonathan Tidi, a 41-year-old American immigrant, at his home in the Judean foothills just a couple of miles from the "Green Line" separating the Israeli and Palestinian settlements. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, the arrest followed rumours that Tidi was boarding weapons to attack Palestinians, a move that could rapidly escalate into widespread bloodshed.

At his home they found a number of weapons, including an M-16 assault rifle, 6,000 rounds of ammunition, hand grenades and night-vision goggles.

But on his arrest, Tidi – a former US Army Ranger – told police he wanted the weapons not to attack Palestinians, but because he feared "total chaos" in 2000 because the millennium bug would shut down "world computer systems". Also, he thought the whole country would be overrun next year by Christian pilgrims.

Someone found his case

persuasive – after two days

questioning Tidi was released,

as the police decided

he had not stocked the

arms to attack Palestinians.

Presumably, the Israeli

security forces must also be

expecting "total chaos".

CHARLES ARTHUR



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Shoot-out at the not-very-OK locale

CITY LIFE BOMBAY

BOMBAYITES saunter through Delhi with a distinctive smugness, and always complain about the dearth of nightlife. It rather resembles the way New Yorkers feel about buttoned-up Washington DC.

As a Delhi-ite myself, wanting to sample the fabled Bombay cocktail of glitz and sleaze cut with sea breeze, I flew down to the rival Indian metropolis recently with high hopes. It was about time to see for myself that sea-front skyline, known as the Queen's Necklace, and to sniff out what really happens here after dark.

But my first hurdle was simply booking a hotel room. Wedding season means there's hardly a room to spare in Bombay at any price these days. What's more, because the cost of office rents soared to the highest in the world a couple of years ago, businesses began leasing hotel suites as a stop-gap and took much of the best accommodation of the market.

After being turned away over the telephone by a dozen hotels, I pleaded with a tourism official at the airport to help me find somewhere to stay.

"It is difficult, madam," he muttered. "Everything's taken." When I implored him to check beyond the government-approved listings, since I needed only a bed plus a working phone and loo, he took a dog-eared notebook out of his pocket and scrawled down an address. "It's not central Mumbai; it's up at Juhu Beach. But they do have a vacancy," he assured me. "You must pay

cash." What he failed to tell me was that the place was in the process of being torn down.

Four seedy flophouses were being refurbished with money from the Middle East into a single grandiose inn. For now, the reception desk was propped up behind wonky beams and plaster dust flaked everywhere, though it was quite encouraging to see a switchboard operator. (He kept trying to redial Dubai.)

Amazingly, my room was intact up on the second floor; hut, with several stairs missing, and dismal lighting. I was forced to share a lift with a swarthy man wearing gloves, who kept cracking his knuckles. He looked like an underworld hitman from central casting. Suddenly fascinated with my room key, I avoided his eyes.

When my flight-attendant friend Tara Kalaria dropped by to check out these Bombay lodgings, she stared gobsmacked at my gleaming marble bathroom and the multiple mirrors near the beds. It was not what she expected after picking her way through the skeletal building.

Tara was utterly appalled at the lack of security: my door was flimsy plasterboard, and there were forced-entry marks around the simple metal latch - the kind you find on a broom closet.

"There's something fishy here. I won't let you stay alone in this place," she declared. "I'm spending the night too." We cut short our evening with her flight crew and cousins at



A film billboard in Bombay. Studios in 'Bollywood' work around the clock, cranking out about 150 features a year

Rex Features/Frank Monaco

Razzhery Rhinoceros, the nearest disco, and returned to my room in the nameless hotel just after midnight.

Before we blocked the entrance with our luggage for the night, we buzzed room service to send up some mineral water; then attempted to phone home to Delhi. All lines were dead. With visions of being snatched

ed away by Bombay's notorious gangsters at any moment, we listened for footsteps in the hallway. I swore to Tara that I had witnessed other guests checking in - that we weren't the only ones. She nodded wisely and flicked on her lighter. By examining the flame's reflection in the mirror, Tara was trying to determine

whether this was two-way reflective glass. Some underworld type could be peeking at us while we slept or undressed. "You read too many thrillers," I scoffed, and then we both froze. Loud voices argued next door, and two gunshots rang out. A door slammed.

Before we could react, the door creaked open again

and we heard feet shuffling. The shouting resumed and two more bullets were fired. We couldn't telephone the police, so we went undercover - and pulled the blankets right over our heads. Again came the shouts.

"Wait a minute," Tara said brightly. "Those are exactly the same words as before. They

must be rehearsing lines." It turns out that, instead of a shoot-out next door, we were overhearing a night shoot. Bollywood studios in the Hindi film capital crank out more features than Hollywood does - some 150 per year - and must work round the clock fit them all in. Studio space is scarce, so inventive directors

set scenes wherever they can. It was just our luck to check in next to the set location for the third shift, which normally lasts beyond 3am.

Racy Bombay nightlife, anyone? Tara and I managed a hasty brush with film stars and gangsters without even having to leave my hotel room.

JAN McGIRK

Cantona stars with a talking monkey

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

He steps over the ball and walks on.

The film, called *Mookie*, is the first in which the former footballer and sardine philosopher has had a starring role since he walked out on Manchester United to start a new career as an actor 18 months ago.

The scene with the ball is the director's way of saying "forget Eric the footballer, welcome Eric the actor".

First reviews of the film in the French press - which generally likes to make fun of Cantona - have been good. "You have to admit, he does it pretty well," Carlos Gómez wrote in *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

Cantona also plays a cameo role, as a French count, in the successful British film *Elizabeth*.

He had a supporting part, while still employed as a footballer, in the French film *Le Bonheur est dans le Pré*.

Mookie is, however, the launch of Cantona's acting career proper. He plays an itinerant French boxer, travelling through small towns in Mexico,

one of whose companions is a talking monkey (the *Mookie* of the title). The director is Hervé Palud, a successful maker of comic and whimsical films, including *Un Indien dans la Ville*. Cantona's role is scarcely demanding. He plays a sportsman from Marseilles with intellectual and philosophical aspirations and a capacity for dry self-parody.

During the making of the film on location in Mexico the boxer who was brought in as Cantona's sparring partner for the fight scenes complained that the ex-footballer was hitting him too hard. To which Cantona replied, in effect: "He hit me first."

Mookie is expected to appear, in dubbed and sub-titled versions, in British cinemas in the middle of next year.



Eric Cantona has graduated from his recent cameo in *Elizabeth* to the starring role in a new French film

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

MPs to criticise UK car prices

THE CAR INDUSTRY will be heavily criticised in a report by MPs tomorrow claiming that British prices are up to 40 per cent higher than for equivalent models sold on the Continent. The report, by the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee, is expected to lay much of the blame on the block exemption car makers enjoy, allowing them to control which dealers sell their cars and on what terms.

The Office of Fair Trading is conducting a separate investigation into the car industry, which is focusing on the use of recommended resale prices and extent to which private buyers are subsidising the big fleets who purchase cars at discounts of up to 40 per cent.

No Post Office share sale

PETER MANDELSON, the Trade and Industry Secretary, is expected to announce greater commercial freedom for the Post Office today, but will stop short of a government share sale. The Post Office monopoly over domestic mail costing less than £1 is to be diluted, with a big reduction in that ceiling. It may also lose its lucrative monopoly over direct mail, due to be abolished by 2003 under EU rules.

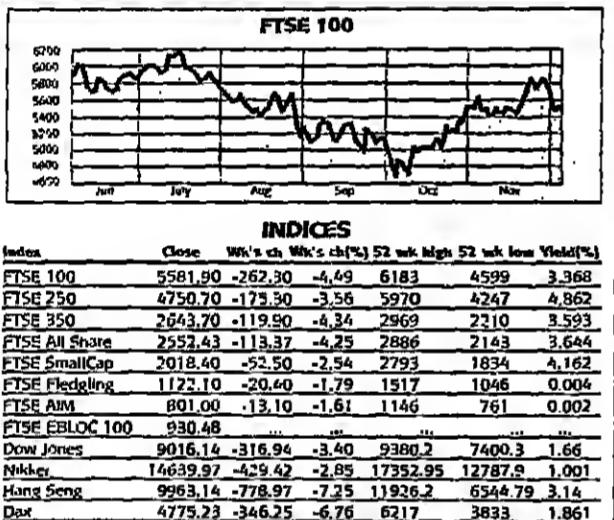
The Post Office is likely to be disappointed, as it had lobbied for partial privatisation in order to be able to borrow more with its borrowings taken off the public sector balance sheet. In the increasingly competitive postal market some of its European rivals have far greater commercial flexibility.

National Grid in Brazil telecom bid

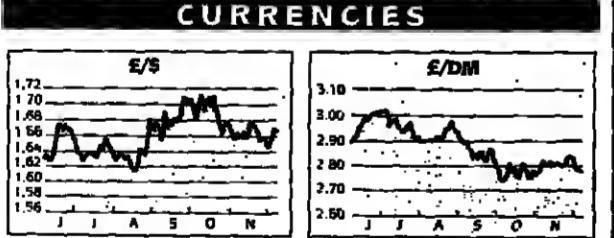
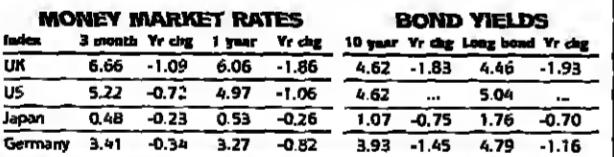
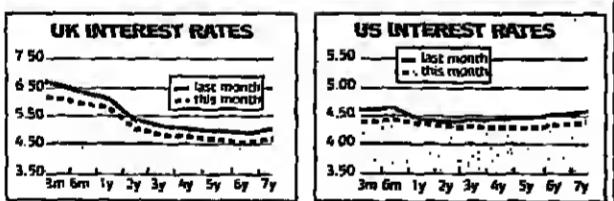
THE NATIONAL GRID is in talks with Sprint, the US telecoms operator, on a joint bid to run a Brazilian telephone network. If successful in the bid, due this week, the \$1bn consortium would compete with the privatised national operator Telebras.

The Grid has chalked up a success with Energis, its UK telecommunications subsidiary, and is keen to expand internationally in both telecommunications and electricity. Brazil's market is particularly attractive, not only because of the country's economic importance, but also because it has only 10 telephone lines per 100 people, compared with about 17 in Argentina and 52 in Britain.

STOCK MARKETS



INTEREST RATES



OTHER INDICATORS

Close	Wk's ch.	Yr ago	Index	Chg	Yr ago	Mean Prg.
Brent Oil (\$)	9.50	-1.14	17.82			
Gold (\$)	392.45	-3.75	285.95			
Silver (\$)	4.78	-0.15	5.30			

www.bloomberg.com/uk SOURCE: BLOOMBERG

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5923	Mexican (nuevo peso)	15.15
Austria (schillings)	18.96	Netherlands (gulders)	3.0387
Belgium (francs)	55.70	New Zealand (\$)	3.0627
Canada (\$)	2.4623	Norway (krone)	12.03
Cyprus (pounds)	0.7964	Portugal (escudos)	275.49
Denmark (kroner)	10.31	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.0587
Finland (markka)	8.2693	Singapore (\$)	2.6283
France (francs)	9.0494	Spain (pesetas)	229.10
Germany (marks)	2.7066	South Africa (rand)	9.3522
Greece (drachma)	455.18	Sweden (krona)	13.07
Hong Kong (\$)	12.42	Switzerland (francs)	2.2145
Ireland (pounds)	1.0838	Thailand (bahts)	54.76
Indian (rupees)	63.49	Turkey (liras)	4.83962
Israel (shekels)	6.4359	USA (\$)	1.6155
Italy (lira)	2684		
Japan (yen)	193.13	Rates for indication purposes only	
Malaysia (ringgit)	6.0570		
Malta (lira)	0.6058		

ScottishPower set for £4.5bn takeover in US

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

SCOTTISHPOWER is set to unveil a £4.5bn takeover of the US power company PacifiCorp, possibly as early as today.

The deal is the latest in a series of huge transatlantic mergers and will create a multi-utility with a combined value of £12.5bn and interests spanning electricity, water and telecoms.

The two companies were last night finalising the terms of the deal at the London offices of the US investment bank Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, ScottishPower's advisers.

PacifiCorp, which has been codenamed Pegasus during the merger negotiations, is being advised by Salomon Smith Barney.

Although the all-share deal will be presented as a merger, it effectively amounts to a takeover. ScottishPower shareholders will emerge with about two-thirds of the enlarged group.

This is the third time Scot-

tishPower has attempted to take over an American electricity company and will represent another first for the acquiring multi-utility.

PacifiCorp, which has headquarters in Portland, has 1.4 million customers and supplies electricity in six US states, including Oregon.

It also has interests in 10,000 megawatts of generating capacity, mainly coal-fired, and owns a number of coal mines. Its revenues last year reached \$6.3bn.

The US utility has been vulnerable to a takeover since it lost the bid battle for Britain's Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, and parted company with its chief executive, Fred Buckman.

ScottishPower was the first UK electricity company to take over a regional electricity com-

pany, Marweb, and the first to acquire a water company in the shape of Southern Water.

Now it is about to become the first UK utility to conclude a transatlantic merger.

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The US utility has been vulnerable to a takeover since it lost the bid battle for Britain's Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, and parted company with its chief executive, Fred Buckman.

ScottishPower's two previous failed attempts to pull off a deal in the US involved Florida Light and Power and Cinergy, which has a half share in the

UK supplier Midlands Electricity. National Power is buying Midlands' supply arm for £180m.

A spokesman for ScottishPower confirmed yesterday that the two companies were in advanced negotiations. Some talks began with PacifiCorp about a month ago.

Although there is no duplication of activities, ScottishPower nevertheless expects to achieve considerable efficiency savings at PacifiCorp.

British Energy, the nuclear electricity generator, has also been scouring the US for an electricity company to acquire and National Grid is interested in buying a US electricity transmission and distribution busi-

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هكذا من الراحل

Lloyds-TSB plans single branch network

LLOYDS-TSB, the high street banking giant, is preparing a huge rebranding exercise to bring its 2,500 branches under a single green and blue Lloyds-TSB banner by the end of next year. The exercise could cost £15m-220m, analysts said.

A final decision will not be taken until next spring. However, Lloyds has been experimenting with joint Lloyds-TSB branches in a number of loca-

By ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

group up and down the country and has been impressed by the results.

Peter Ellwood the Lloyds-TSB chief executive said: "If the (pilot schemes) continue to be as successful as they have been, the likelihood is that we will rebrand."

Since Lloyds bought the TSB

group in December 1995, around 300 branches have been closed. The group has continued to keep the brands and the branch networks separate because of fears that it may alienate loyal customers.

But, Mr Ellwood said, customer attitudes have shifted in the three years since Lloyds bought TSB. Most customers surveyed recently said they were more concerned about the



quality of service and the convenience of branch locations than whether it was a Lloyds or TSB bank.

However, there are no plans to do away with the Cheltenham & Gloucester brand. Mr Ellwood said. The C&G is now

the sole supplier of mortgages within the group, with a £40bn lending book. It has 230 branches.

"The brand is so powerful. Its share of net new mortgage lending is 13.2 per cent. It is punching above its weight," Mr Ellwood said. Lloyds-TSB is now three-quarters of the way towards achieving its target of £300m cost savings before the end of 1999.

Mr Ellwood said Lloyds was keen to make a big acquisition, but the bank was not interested in a rival clearer. "There are quite heavy regulatory issues with everything very big," he said.

"We have made no secret that we think that if the market consolidated further we would be interested in both a mortgage provider and an insurance provider."

Mr Ellwood said the bank had not ruled out a bid abroad. However, he pointed out that outside the UK, a bidder is expected typically to pay a 20-30 per cent premium which is difficult to justify if you cannot move quickly to cut costs.

"We've not restricted our expansion to the UK," he said. "But in Europe they have very low returns on equity and very low labour flexibility."

'Safe haven' status puts tobacco groups in Footsie

THE STOCK MARKET convulsions of the past few months have been enough to turn investors to smoking. As Footsie seesawed, stressed-out traders have been steadily pouring money into tobacco stocks - a classic safe haven in uncertain times.

The nicotine sector will receive a punt of confidence on Wednesday when two of its members look set to be admitted to the Footsie. Imperial Tobacco, the maker of Regal and Lambert & Butler, is odds-on to become a blue chip when the FTSE Actuaries Committee meets for its quarterly review of the indices. Rival Gallaher is less of a certainty but, barring any sharp stomp today or tomorrow, should join the big boys a mere 19 months after floating.

The two stocks have benefited from the traditional defensive qualities of the tobacco sector. Little exposure to the vagaries of the international economy, an almost recession-proof pool of customers and no or no exposure to the costly US lawsuits have given the market what it most wants in times of trouble: a steady stream of earnings.

Imperial, demerged from the Hanson conglomerate in August 1996, has also made a couple of crowd-pleasing acquisitions. The £165m takeover of Naza, the rolling paper maker, and the £60m purchase of the tobacco interests of the Dutch giant Douwe Egberts Van Nelle were well received by analysts. They liked Imperial's price to rise 7.6-8.6 per cent over the past year to Friday's close of 648p.

Gallaher, which makes Benson & Hedges and Silk Cut, has had a good run too, rising by a third to Friday's 43p. Analysts like the company for its strong brands and good international prospects.

Another rump of Lord Hanson's empire could join the Foot-

STOCK MARKET WEEK



FRANCESCO GUERRERA

sie on Wednesday. Hanson, the building materials group, could bring the name back to the main index. A string of bolt-on acquisitions in the US, where the road-building market is booming, have boosted the shares. The resolution of a long-standing legal dispute with the American authorities also helped to increase Hanson's market cap to around £2.8bn - very close to the Footsie threshold.

In a bizarre coincidence, Hanson looks set to replace Misys. The IT group joined the Footsie in May when Energy Group, a former division of - guess what? - the Hanson conglomerate, was bought by Texas Utilities. The IT debacle at Wednesday's meeting will be completed by the ejection of Sema. The software group only entered the blue-chip club in September, but since then the shares have lost more than 20

per cent on fears of a dry-up in orders from big financial clients.

As two real IT stocks go out, one would-be IT company, Dixons, goes in. The electrical retailer has been the market's flavour of the past few months. Analysts have been inspired by the incredible success of its Internet service. Some have even been talking about a re-rating in line with the ballooning valuations of hi-tech stocks.

The Footsie revolving doors should also see Martin Sorrell's advertising agency WPP and the healthcare group Nycomed Amersham on their way out. The new Footsie configuration will take effect from December 21 to allow the index-tracking funds to pile up on the new boys and dump the has-beens.

The undercard will see a fair bit of change too. A dozen stocks are expected to drop out of the FTSE-250. The most eye-catching casualty is BICC. The construction and cable group, once a proud member of the top club, has been hammered by tough market conditions. Sales are still at over £4bn but BICC has sunk to just £250m, and a humiliating relegation to the small cap looks certain.

MFJ, the cash-and-carry retailer; the cash-and-carry group Booker, another fallen giant, and the textile company Coats Vyella will also be axed. They will be replaced by a four-strong "biotech pack": Chiroscience, SkyePharma, Powderject and Celftech will lead the beleaguered sector's charge into the FTSE-250.

FOOTSIE INS AND OUTS

INS	OUTS
1 Imperial Tobacco	1 Sema
2 Dixons	2 Misys
3 Hanson	3 Nycomed Amersham
4 Gallaher	4 WPP

THIS WEEK'S DIARY

TODAY - Interfax: Acal, Ashbury Group, British Land Company, Carco Eng, Columbia Group, Faupel Trading, Jarvis, Norba, Powderfert Pharm, Spring Group, Top Estates, Worthington Group. Finals: Phytopharma, Premier Assets, Treat, Economics: October industrial production, October manufacturing output. Events: Barclays deputy chairman, Sir Peter Large, gives evidence to Treasury Committee.

TUESDAY - Interfax: Berkeley Group, Scottish and Newcastle, Boustead Group, BT, Payworld, Jasmin, London Clubs Int., Prism Railways, VHE Holding. Finals: Aberdeen Asset, Hazelstock Group, Landmark, Ultralite. Economics: BRC Retail Sales Monitor.

WEDNESDAY - Interfax: Advel, Courts, Prelude Trust, Scottish Hydro, Smith, Threlk, Finlays: Apollo Metals, Arithrixon,

Greenhalgh's Group, Heaf's, Metroline, Sage Group, SHL Group, Victron. Events: Monetary Policy Committee begins two-day interest rate meeting, George Soros gives evidence to the Treasury Committee.

THURSDAY - Interfax: Bulmer, Fine Art Developments, First Technology, Hadleigh Group, Hi-tech Sports, HP Bulmer Holdings, Limit, Reliance Security, Samuel Heath and Sons, Stagecoach, Harvey Nichols, Finlays: Brooks Industrial, Compay, Countywide Properties, Daily Mail and General, Howe Holding, Racal Engineering, Economics: Monetary Policy Committee meeting ends.

FRIDAY - Interfax: Atlantic Telecom, Protex International. Finals: Bradstock Group, Elridge Pipe, Granger Trust, Warner Estate, Windsor Estate. Economics: October machine tool output.

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Davis Cup rethink follows Swedish success

AS THE arias subsided on Saturday with the realisation that Italy's Davis Cup final campaign had ended in defeat after three matches, Davide Sangiusti's mobile telephone was stolen from the side of the court. The Italian No 2 was probably relieved that he was unable to take calls.

By this time the switchboard at SVT, the Swedish terrestrial television service, had resumed normal service. It had been jammed by irate viewers complaining that coverage of Friday's epic opening match between Magnus Norman and

TENNIS

By JOHN ROBERTS
in Milan

Andrea Gaudenzi had been cut off with the Swede serving at 5-4 in the fifth set.

Regional news programmes were shown in place of the dramatic climax to events at the Fila Forum, where Gaudenzi saved a match point and was then forced to retire because of a torn shoulder ligament when serving at 6-6 0-30.

This was not the first example of Swedish television pulling

the plug on the Davis Cup. The match between Thomas Enqvist and Italy's Renzo Furlan during last year's semi-final was cut for a children's programme, and none of the monumental 1996 final against France in Malmö was shown live.

"It seems that they don't understand what the Davis Cup... means to people," said Jan Francke, president of the Swedish Tennis Federation, who is among the contenders to succeed Brian Tobin as president of the International Tennis Federation next July.

Tobin saw Swedish televi-

sion's action as part of a wider problem. "We love exciting five-set matches like we had here on the first day," he said. "Great drama, great stuff. Swedish television knocked off in the fifth set and didn't finish the match because of time constraints. That's not very good from their point of view. But, again, it leads home to the fact that we have to try to contain the matches into some sort of reasonable period."

The Davis Cup Committee is considering a proposal to have three-set singles matches for the first two rounds of the com-

petition and five-set singles matches for the semi-finals and final. The doubles matches - the only contest played on the second day - would continue to be played over five sets.

"We're looking into that proposal for 2001," Tobin said. "It's out of deference to the players to some extent, their schedule. It's out of deference to the time people sit and to the television time you can get."

Tobin was asked if there was not a danger of damaging the purity of the game. "That's the fear," he agreed. "Neale Fraser is an Australian member

of the Davis Cup Committee, who captained in Davis Cup matches, will tell you that stamina and fitness is a big component of being able to win tennis matches. He believes that five-set matches are the ultimate test. He's weakening, though."

Fraser's idea is to play two three-set matches on the opening day while retaining five sets for the doubles and "live" reverse singles.

Tobin, emphasising that the committee is "only discussing options", added that another proposal was to reduce the

number of teams in the elite World Group from 16 to 14.

"What does that do? It gives the two finalists [from the previous year] a bye. Sometimes you win the Davis Cup in December and you lose it in February. It would supposedly give the top players one match less in a year: one week less. Does that get [Petel] Sampras, or whoever, to play? I don't know."

"We're looking at perhaps combining some sort of round-robin system instead of a knockout for the first three rounds. That way you know where the matches are, which helps the

host country promoting. Television knows where it is, sponsors know where it is. The competition has been going for a hundred years... and we've got to be very careful to change it. We don't want to go backwards."

Diego Nargiso saved Italy from a whitewash, defeating Norman 6-2 6-3 in the second of yesterday's reverse singles.

DAVIS CUP FINAL (MILAN, IT): **Singles** (FRI): M Norman (Swe) bt A Gaudenzi (It) 7-5 4-6 6-4 6-3 (Gaudenzi retired injured); D Sanguineti (It) 6-1 6-4 6-0. **Double** (SAT): I Bjorkman and N Wijkander (Swe) 6-1 6-2 6-1; Sanguineti (It) 6-4 6-1; D Nargiso bt M Norman 6-2 6-3. (Sweden win 4-1).

Headley and Hick aim for Adelaide

THERE CAN seldom have been a less relevant fixture than the one currently being played in the world's largest cricket stadium between an England side lacking its Test attack and a Victoria team shorn of eight first-choice players. Indeed, the MCG has been so empty over the last few days that you could almost beat the clamour for places in the next Test. As these amount to perhaps two spots at most, the noise has not been deafening.

So far, the strongest claims have come from Graeme Hick, who scored 67, and Dean Headley. Mind you, against a side recognisable only by name as Victoria, it was difficult to draw any solid conclusions other than confirmation that Hick is a lambaster of second-rate bowling and that the England tail does not require the close attentions of a decent fast bowler to collapse.

In fact if the shortcomings of the opposition proved anything, it was that Angus Fraser's struggle to find rhythm and no one was over and while Headley was busy bowling himself into contention, Fraser was bowling himself out of it.

An MCG pitch that had glorious hours and some occasional lateral movement, Headley consistently troubled the batsmen and deserved better than the two wickets he finished the day with. Headley can be distinctly slippery when the mood takes him and he was the only England bowler to hurry his opponents on an otherwise sluggish pitch.

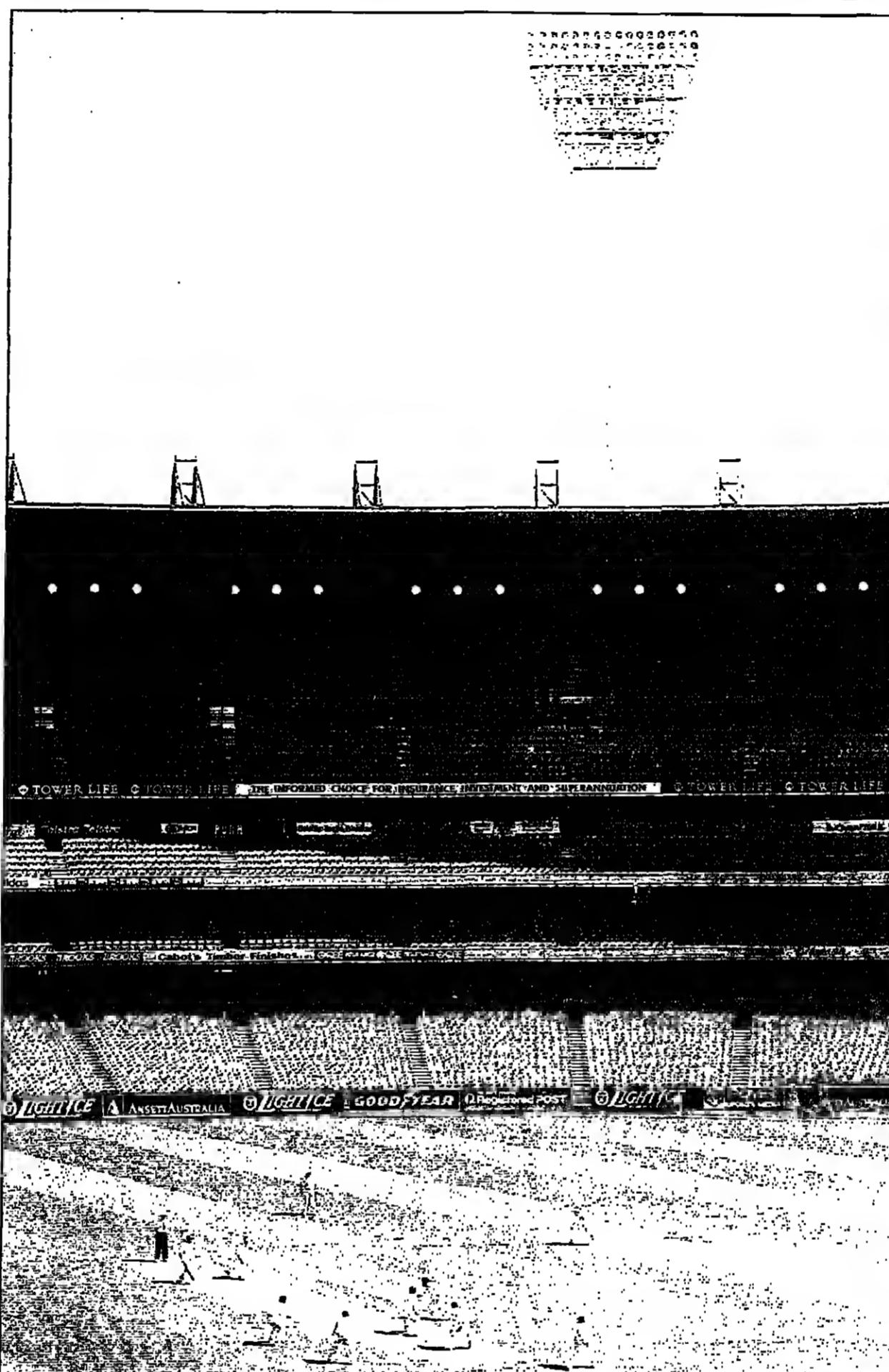
Matthew Mott, a stodgy left-handed opener, edged a beauty that bounced and left him in the howler's second over, while Graeme Thorpe at first slip, was beaten for pace as he tried to cut. At one point, Victoria were 87 for 5 before a patient partnership between Shawn Craig and the wicketkeeper Peter Roach stopped the immediate rot and got within 50 runs of the follow-on target.

As one of the recognisable athletes in the squad, Headley also fielded pretty well, taking a smart catch by his ankles at mid-on and managing a run-out from the same position with a brilliant pick-up and direct hit to dismiss Jason Armerger. He would indeed

have seen England practising catching like this.

Hearing the comments, England's coach, David Lloyd, not always the calmest of people when criticism is being dished out, went to put the record straight. On a quiet day, speculation that Lloyd had rowed with Jones, formerly captain of Derbyshire, began to spread like a bush fire.

In fact Lloyd, who is on a last warning from the England Cricket Board about his conduct, did not speak to Jones at all. Instead, he sought out the Channel 7 producer Margaret Hutchings to put the record straight. Apparently, he pointed out that had Jones been on the ground earlier, before play had begun, he would indeed



Empty seats at the MCG but Graeme Hick and Dean Headley may have booked their tickets for the next Test. Allsport

commenting on Channel 7, said he felt England would be better served by practising skills like catching rather than fitness like this.

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have seen England practising catching like this.

For once, Lloyd was well within his rights to point out the inaccuracy. Unfortunately, in the wake of Graham Gooch's continuing curmudgeon, as it will probably be used to reinforce the belief that all Poms are whingers.

Actually two of the side, Hick and Ben Hollioake, had genuine cause for complaint and both were victims of liberal interpretations of the law.

Both were key dismissals as England lost their last five wickets for 17 runs, three of them to Jason Roach, a medium-pacer of few pretensions.

In an ideal world, Hollioake, playing as a batting all-rounder, would be the answer to England's problems at No 7. As it was, only his second knock of the tour ended prematurely when he shuffled and played across a length ball that would have missed leg stump.

Later his bowling - his first stint of the tour - was little better.

Despite the important wicket of Brad Hodge, a centurion in this fixture four years

ago, his spell was littered with no-balls and no-balls. At 21, he still has enormous potential, but on the evidence here his graduation to becoming an all-rounder of Test class is patchy at best.

That, by and large, is England's problem and it does not help in the creation of a balanced side when those who can bat cannot bowl and those who can bowl cannot bat. However, if this makes England's task of levelling the series in Adelaide that much more difficult, this match has at least given their

captain, Alec Stewart, some much-needed time in the middle.

Amazingly, his century was only his second from the 46 first-class innings he has played this year.

The match, despite its lack of allure, may well have served a purpose by giving Thorpe a work-out, too. Over the past few series he has been England's most successful batsman against Australia. If Perth is anything to go by, England need Thorpe fit and firing, not watching from the sidelines with a corset on.

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Precise Price punishes Woods

NICK PRICE snatched the \$1m (£600,000) first prize from Tiger Woods in a dramatic sudden-death play-off at the Million Dollar Challenge in South Africa yesterday.

The big hitters' duel at Sun City was all square over the first four extra holes, but Price's better approach shot on the third visit to the par-four 17th left him with an easier putt.

Woods put his uninspired performance over the first two rounds down to jet-lag and he now faces another long flight to Australia for the President's Cup.

Meanwhile, Greg Chalmers won the Australian Open championship after an emotionally charged finish to the final round. Chalmers ended with a closing round two-under-par 70 for a 72-hole total of even-par 228 then looked on as his two nearest rivals both missed birdie attempts which would have forced a play-off.

Stuart Appleby, playing his first tournament at home since his wife was killed in a traffic accident outside a London station, narrowly missed an 18-foot putt on the final hole to finish one shot behind after a final round 72. The 1989 Australian Open winner Peter Senior also missed a long-range putt on the final green in a round of 70 to finish tied with Appleby at one over.

Nick Faldo's expected challenge failed to materialise after he dropped two shots on the front nine to fall five of the pace. The Englishman played the back nine in one-under but was never close enough to mount a serious challenge.

Chalmers, who qualified for next year's US PGA circuit after coming through the tour school last month, became the first left-hander since Claude Feltman in 1909 to win the championship.

He looked to be cruising to a comfortable victory midway through the final day as he thrived in the gusty conditions at the Royal Adelaide links. Then came the dramatic final few holes.

The League, for so long languishing in the backwaters of international club basketball,

GOLF
BY KIERAN DALEY
in Sun City

I had a chance. I pulled both putts, right to left, and that's as good as it gets. In order to beat a calibre of putter like Nick Price you're going to have to make one of those putts, and I didn't make one of those putts," he said.

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The League, for so long languishing in the backwaters of international club basketball,

Nottingham Panthers' Simon Hunt (right) tracks down Mark Woolf, of Ayr Scottish Eagles, at the Sheffield Arena on Saturday

Empics

Virta's reality sees off holders

THE FIRST trophy of the domestic season was settled in favour of a Nottingham Panthers side whose will to win the Benson & Hedges Cup for the third time proved stronger than Ayr Scottish Eagles' desire to become the first team in the competition's seven-year history to defend it successfully.

Last season's grand slamme - beaten 2-1 - were outplayed in the first and last periods of a tense match in which the netminders, Vincent Riendeau of Ayr and Trevor Robins of Nottingham, both former NHL men, distinguished themselves with some outstanding saves.

But it was the middle phase that turned out to be decisive. With Trevor Burgess off the ice, in the penalty box for the second time in the period, Nottingham's Finnish forward Pekka Virta took advantage of the powerplay to rifle home the winning goal, his second of the match.

The Panthers could, and perhaps should, have added one or two more before the first interval, Leach himself coming closest when he hit the post. After that the effects of Ayr's wearing trip and last-minute defeat by Mannheim in midweek looked to have worn off. But it

BY ADAM SZRETER
in Sheffield

Saturday evening's entertainment for a new full house of around 8,000 at the Sheffield Arena had begun with the obligatory anthems, in Ayr's case "Flower of Scotland", although with no British players, let alone any Scots, in their line-up the Maple Leaf might have been more appropriate. Nottingham were only finding one Englishman in Simon Hunt but their fans, heavily outnumbering those from north of the border, would have cheered for anything with a Panther on its chest.

The opening period lived up to their expectations despite Ayr taking the lead against the run of play with a scintillating solo effort from David St Pierre, who caught the eye on more than one occasion with the kind of weaving run that led

to his goal. The Ayr captain, Angelo Catena, an Italian-Canadian previously with Rotterdam, earned the credit for the assist with an astute pass out of defence.

The opening goal came after 10.59 seconds and, very briefly, the wind was taken out of Nottingham's sails. But it took them just 23 seconds to strike back and Catena's opposite number, Jamie Leach, was the architect. Leach, a Stanley Cup winner in his time with the Pittsburgh Penguins, worked an opening on the left before flicking the puck back inside the Virta and his instinctive drive flew into the roof of Riendeau's net.

The Panthers could, and perhaps should, have added one or two more before the first interval, Leach himself coming closest when he hit the post. After that the effects of Ayr's wearing trip and last-minute defeat by Mannheim in midweek looked to have worn off. But it

was one of Nottingham's two last-minute recruits from North America, Jason Weaver, who began to make a real impact.

Weaver and Darcy Loewen had flown in just two days before the final as Nottingham's injury crisis showed no sign of abating.

It was a great game, and a great advert for us," he said. "You've got to have some sympathy for Ayr: They are all-conquering last year but I'm sure that no team is going to do a grand slam again."

Mike Blaisdell, the triumphant coach, also paid tribute to his opponents. "They've got some great hockey players and they are tough to break down," he said.

"There are a lot of teams

in the league that we would have beaten hadly tonight because we came at them pretty hard, but they can weather a storm and they don't panic, ever."

As for Nottingham, Saturday's final followed swiftly by last night's league encounter with high-flying Manchester, and, with another game at home to Bracknell tomorrow night, it seems there is no rest for the wicked Panthers.

British league stands firm over imports

THE INTERNATIONAL Federation's decision to scrap all restrictions on the numbers of foreigners playing for clubs in European competitions will not lead the Budweiser League to increase its own limit above five per team, according to its chief executive, Mike Smith.

Smith, who qualified for next year's US PGA circuit after coming through the tour school last month, became the first left-hander since Claude Feltman in 1909 to win the championship.

He looked to be cruising to a comfortable victory midway through the final day as he thrived in the gusty conditions at the Royal Adelaide links. Then came the dramatic final few holes.

The League has allowed five foreigners per team, almost exclusively Americans, against

BY RICHARD TAYLOR
in Birmingham

has been cast in a revolutionary light by FIBA's move to allow total freedom of movement by players, including Americans, between clubs.

The League has allowed five foreigners per team, almost exclusively Americans, against

an allowance of two for the rest of the world. English clubs should now be more likely to compete in Europe, though they will still suffer from lack of finance and quality players.

FIBA's decision will, in theory, permit 10 Americans per team, although they will still allow national federations to set their own limits.

Smith said: "Back in 1996,

after the Bosman ruling, we always believed it would prove legally unsustainable for FIBA to restrict the number of nationalities on a club but I would not expect our owners to be in favour of allowing up to 10 foreigners per team."

With some exceptions the overall standard of Americans has dropped, as the salary cap has restricted the clubs' ability

to attract higher quality players and the best English talent plays on the Continent.

FIBA will decide in May when the new regulations will come into force.

In the League Trophy, Chester Jets took a clear lead in Group A by following up Saturday's 82-77 win at Milton Keynes by defeating Thames Valley Tigers 96-78 last night.

Liverpool to lay low Vigo

DESPITE SATURDAY'S 2-1 defeat at Tottenham, Liverpool look a fair bet to beat Celta Vigo in the second leg of their third round Uefa Cup tie at Anfield tomorrow night. The Spanish club, third in La Liga following Saturday's 1-1 draw at Salamanca, ruthlessly exploited Liverpool's legion defensive frailties with a 3-1 victory in the first leg and are odds-on to go through to the quarter finals.

But that easy first leg win means Celta Vigo can afford to lose a goal tomorrow and, although they would much prefer the comfort of an easy draw, the visitors are bound to defend deep all night and, if they go a goal down, are unlikely to make much of an effort to do anything about it.

Manchester United may be held to a draw by Bayern Munich in their Group D match in the Champions' League at Old Trafford on Wednesday. For a side which has conceded just 13 goals in 15 games in the Bundesliga this season, Bayern conceded two unbelievably soft goals in their 2-2 draw with United in Munich. And, despite Bayern's 2-2 draw at VfB Bochum on Friday night, United cannot bank on finding the Munich defence in such generous mood again.

And for Peter Schmeichel, the United goalkeeper, it might be a case of "able was I ere I saw Elber". For Giovanni, Bayern's outstanding Brazilian striker of that name, the leading goal scorer in the Bundesliga with nine goals, could easily run amok amid United's fragile defence.

BY IAN DAVIES

With the Champions' League entering its final round of matches there are some good bets to be had. In Group A, Porto, already eliminated, may go down to their visitors Ajax, who could qualify if they win, while in Group B, Athletic Bilbao (also out) may lose to Galatasaray, another club in with a chance of qualifying.

In Group C, the moderate Sturm Graz (out) are unlikely to put up much of a battle against the fighting-for-survival Internazionale, while in Group E, Panathinaikos, despite losing 4-2 to Olympiakos on Saturday, could make short work of Galatasaray, another club in with a chance of qualifying.

Sturm's 2-1 win over the Spaniards in their last match was a good result, but the visitors are bound to defend deep all night and, if they go a goal down, are unlikely to make much of an effort to do anything about it.

Cordell Williams, R. L. Luddes, S. Stanley, T. Rose

AYR

HYPERION
1.00 Premier Cru 1.30 Rapier 2.00 Prime Example 2.30 Maître De Musique 3.00 Hancock 3.30 Fan D'estrival

GOING: Good to Soft (soft in straight).
■ Left-hand galloping course: run-in 200yds.

■ Course is E of town on A75. Ayr station (service from Glasgow) in. ADMISSION: Club £14; Grandstand £7; OAPs half-price; CAR PARK: Free.

■ FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs M Reevley 23-13 (72%) J O'Neill 10-13 (10%) P Monteith 17-12 (14%)

LEADING JOCKEYS: A Dobbie 22-14 (22%) A St Pierre 12-14 (10%) P Niven 11-12 (11%) R Supple 10-12 (10%)

FAVOURITES: 1.00 146-373 (92%)

LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS: Star Selection (100) has been blinkered first time: Ivy House (200).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Ivy House (200).

Scores, Digest, page 22

FAKENHAM

HYPERION

12.50 Barton Scamp 1.20 No Such Person 1.50

River Beat 2.20 Dandie Imp 2.50 Take Cover 3.20 Alzamora

INSPECTION 7.30am.

GOING: Good to Soft (good in places).

■ Left-hand, light course. Run-in 200yds.

■ Course is N of town off A145. ADMISSION: Members £12; Grandstand £10; under-18s £6; under-16s £3; CAR PARK: Members £7 (for evening meetings); remainder £10.

■ FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs O Heine 23-13 (50%) A C Doyle 10-12 (12%)

LEADING JOCKEYS: A Dobbie 11-12 (11%) R Supple 10-12 (10%) P Monteith 10-12 (10%)

FAVOURITES: 1.00 12.50-1.20 (82%)

LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS: Star Selection (100) has been blinkered first time: No Such Person, Take Cover, Alzamora (100).

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Scores, Digest, page 22

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LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs O Heine

Imperial force on the march again

WHEN IMPERIAL Call won the Gold Cup at Cheltenham in 1996, his colours were mounted in the track's Hall of Fame, and that, it seemed for a long time, was as close as they would ever get to glory at Prestbury Park again. While Imperial Call struggled to overcome injuries and a loss of form, the next generation of chasers developed and flourished, and Ireland found new idols like Dorans Pride and Florida Pearl to carry its hopes at the Festival in March.

But no-one told the horse that he was last year's model, and yesterday he jumped and galloped like the champion he once was to beat Dorans Pride in the John Durkan Memorial Punchestown Chase. The King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day is expected to be his next assignment, and he is now as short as 12-1 to become the first horse in National Hunt history to regain the Gold Cup.

There were just one and a half lengths between Imperial Call and Dorans Pride at the line yesterday, but taking the race as a whole, the difference between them was rather more apparent. While the former champion's fencing was fast and accurate, Dorans Pride made a series of mistakes and he only closed on Imperial Call when Paul Carberry, the winner's jockey, was confident that victory was already his.

"I was happy to let him bowl along at a sensible pace and be what was getting lengths at his fences," Carberry said. "I didn't want to make too much use of him in holding ground but I'm very happy with the way he did it."

The only question in anyone's mind afterwards was whether Bob Treacy, a 25-1 outsider, might have beaten them both but for a bad mistake at the final fence, and his unexpected presence at the finish certainly seems to have coloured the tote's judgement of the form.

The Gold Cup's sponsors will stay 20-1 about Imperial Call winning the race again next year, which is almost twice

BY GREG WOOD

the price of Dorans Pride, who is generally a 12-1 chance.

Richard Dunwoody, Dorans Pride's jockey, yesterday, reported that "he made a mistake at the last fence first time round and it took him an awful long time to get going again. Jumping out of that ground doesn't help my horse."

The Irish, of course, still believe that they have something even better at home. Florida Pearl, who will not see a racecourse until the Ericsson Chase at Leopardstown in three weeks' time, is Ladbrokes' 7-2 favourite from 4-1 for the Gold Cup.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Opera Buff
(Lingfield 2.10)
NB: Course Doctor
(Ayr 3.00)

The Ericsson Chase is also a possible target for Imperial Call, but Kempton's Boxing Day meeting is the first choice for Raymond Hurley, who took charge of his preparation when Fergie Sutherland, his former trainer, retired.

"The King George would be my preference," he said, "although we won't be making plans until we see how quickly he recovers in the next few days." Sarah Lane, speaking on behalf of Imperial Call's owners, confirmed that "if he's in good form and there's a cut in the ground, we would be very tempted."

Last year's King George winner, See More Business, is also on course for Kempton after his defeat of Dom Samourai in the Rehearsal Chase at Cheltenham on Saturday, although he too would benefit from easy ground.

"He's the sort of horse who improves for a run or two and he is bound to improve from yesterday," Paul Nicholls, his trainer, said yesterday. "But it all depends on the ground on the day. If it is good to firm he might not even go to Kempton."



Imperial Call (left) asserts as Bob Treacy falters and Dorans Pride flounders in their wake in the John Durkan Chase at Punchestown yesterday

Corinne Norris

Not surprisingly, the Ericsson Chase would be the obvious alternative.

Dom Samourai, meanwhile, will return to Cheltenham on 24 December and attempt to improve Martin Pipe's already outstanding record in the Welsh National. Pipe has already won the race five times, although it is five years since Riverside Boy provided him with his most recent success.

"I was very pleased with the way he ran yesterday and the plan is to run in the Welsh National as that looks the right sort of race for him," Pipe said yesterday, which explains why

GOLD CUP BETTING

	C	H	L	T
Florida Pride	41	41	72	52
See More Business	61	71	61	71
Dorans Pride	21	51	51	141
Saty Bay	121	121	101	141
Teletor Mill	141	141	111	161
Imperial Call	121	141	121	201
Unashamed	201	141	141	141
Escapogaea	141	141	251	141
Cheltenham 16 March 1999				
Each-way: 1/4 the odds, places 1, 2, 3				
C Coral, H William Hill, L Ladbrokes, T tote				

Each-way: 1/4 the odds, places 1, 2, 3

C Coral, H William Hill, L Ladbrokes, T tote

GATFLAX, WHO finished a tail-off last of nine finishers on Saturday on his first run since his record-breaking purchase for 2000,000 guineas, faces a series of tests to pinpoint the cause of his failure. The gelding is the most expensive jumper sold at public auction in Britain.

Andy Turnell, Gatflax's new trainer, initially blamed a broken blood vessel for the six-year-old's dismal showing on Saturday in a novice chase at Wetherby. But the trainer said

yesterday: "He seems fine today. He wasn't distressed last night and he ate up."

"He bled from both nostrils after the race but we will canter him and scope him and see if it's his lungs. He also cut his lip when he overjumped at a fence and we hope that the blood from his nose is related to that, rather than his lungs."

"It was disappointing but at least we know that he is better than that. He won't run for at least a week but he could be out again at Christmas."

OLIVIER PESLIER yesterday became the first European to win the World Super Jockeys Series, in Japan. John Murtagh and Frankie Dettori filled the last two places in the competition between 13 riders.

■ Lord Huntingdon, who is to retire from training at the end of the year, scored with his final overseas runner when Tiger Shark won the Critérium du Languedoc at Toulouse.

■ Racing at Fakenham today hinges on a 7.30am inspection because of frost and snow.

FIRST SHOW

LINGFIELD 3.30

	C	H	L	S	T
Night City	51	93	41	51	92
Indonesia	112	61	62	72	61
Silly Pig	112	81	82	61	61
Take A Turn	112	81	81	62	62
Opera Buff	61	52	61	62	61
Glow Forum	91	101	101	101	91
Statuej	104	81	101	101	101
Trainers' Review	91	101	71	91	91
Dale Arch	114	111	91	101	101
Metron Stake	351	311	331	331	331
Shimewell	501	501	501	501	401
Espresso a user of the odds, places 1, 2, 3					
C Coral, H William Hill, L Ladbrokes, T tote					

FORM GUIDE

Flying Officer: Hold Keen Hounds, Greensteen Lady and Lucy Caroline on recent AW form. Missed the break first time out, but was always up with the leaders when 2nd to Adele Boy at Southwell (5f) last month. Good chance over longer trip.

Keen Hounds: Failed over 11 when 6th to Adele Boy at Southwell last time. No sign of his usual form, but he has won over 1000m at Newmarket and 2nd to Greensteen Lady at Wetherby (5f) last month. 2nd to Adele Boy at Southwell (5f) last time and in reasonable form on flat. Wetherby: Failed over 15 when 6th to Adele Boy at Wetherby last time and 4th to Greensteen Lady at Wetherby (5f) last month. Maiden 1600m at Newmarket (5f) last month. Maiden 1600m at Newmarket (5f) last month. Maiden 1600m at Newmarket (5f) last month when 11th before finishing 8th to Bushwacker. Has been dropped 6lb and is 10lb lower than his last mark, so would make more appeal in a handicap.

America: Rare Irish runner on the AW. Acts on soft ground and usually races prominently from the start which will be a good advantage here.

Debbie's Hope: Has started slowly in both outings and could only stay on at one point. Failed over 16 when 10th to Greensteen Lady at Wetherby (5f) last month. May do better in time over a longer trip.

Greensteen Lady: Had every chance 21 out when 3rd to Rancan and Flying Officer at Wetherby (5f) last month. Maiden 1600m at Newmarket (5f) last month. Maiden 1600m at Newmarket (5f) last month. Maiden 1600m at Newmarket (5f) last month when 11th before finishing 8th to Bushwacker. Has been dropped 6lb and is 10lb lower than his last mark, so would make more appeal in a handicap.

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Villa survive test of their character

IT WAS surely just coincidence but, given John Gregory's unorthodox management style, it could have been a cheeky bit of one-upmanship. No sooner had Alex Ferguson finished deflecting questions about the loss of Brian Kidd than Gregory rubbed it in by sending his own No 2, Steve Harrison, to represent him in the press conference. It was if to say: "You may have 19 internationals but you don't have an assistant manager."

It was appropriate enough because, while Manchester United had been wrestling with the disruption caused by Kidd's departure, Aston Villa had clearly been reaping the value of a good No 2. United's visit represented the biggest test of their three-month reign as Premiership leaders and there was evidence that Harrison's well-known qualities as a joker and less publicised expertise as a defensive coach, had both been in use last week.

From the man on the Tannoy, who sounded in awe of United's reputation at half-time, to the players,



**GLENN
MOORE**

who had not even scored against them for three years, it was clear that respect was the order of the day. Lee Hendrie confessed he had been "so excited I couldn't sleep last night" and even Dwight Yorke was accorded a generous greeting before the game - and was less abused than David Beckham during it.

Thus when United went ahead after 46 minutes, one could have forgiven Villa for thinking the game was up. Instead they produced a vibrant

response which deserved the resulting 1-1 draw, even if it did take a defected goal to secure the point.

"It was an important game for us, particularly the young lads," said Gareth Southgate, the Aston Villa captain. "United are used to playing these games and we aren't. Every match they play the opposition are really fired up. You have to play in these games to gain that experience and it will do us the world of good, we came through it well."

Villa were also much more secure at the back than in recent matches. They had begun the season playing a compact 3-5-2 and, in their first 10 games, conceded just three goals. Then Dion Dublin arrived and they switched to playing three up front, with Paul Merson playing off the front pair.

Though they scored as many goals (11) in the next four games as they had in the first 10, they conceded nine. On Saturday Gregory and Harrison, to general approval from the players, reverted to 3-5-2, and Villa looked much more secure.

"It was important today to be solid," added Southgate, "but we didn't create any less, which was pleasing. The midfield did a great job going forward and getting back." One of those midfielders, Alan Thompson, who impressed on his recall, added hopefully: "I think playing three in midfield is where we are best and we should see more of that system."

Whether Villa made enough chances is debatable. They had more pressure than United, but did not create that much. Hendrie and Ian Taylor got in each other's way after one flowing first-half move, Ugo Ehiogu went close with two headers from corners, and there were several pots from the edge of the box but Peter Schmeichel was rarely tested in open play.

Gregory had admitted beforehand: "I've always known that playing a two-man midfield with Paul [Merson] behind the strikers was a risk, but while three men in the middle makes us rock solid we lose something offensively. We're not as creative or free-scoring." Since de-

fences win championships, though Villa may stay with the present system - especially if Thompson, Taylor and Hendrie can increase their goal threat.

It is certainly the shape likely to be seen at Chelsea on Wednesday and probably at home to Arsenal on Sunday, though Merson will be doing his utmost to be fit for that game. On Saturday, with the wing-backs pushed on, it gave Villa a numerical supremacy in midfield that United only rectified by bringing on Nicky Butt for Andy Cole. On another day, not with half an eye on Wednesday's European tie with Bayern Munich, they might have responded by pushing their full-backs on.

It would have made for a more attractive game though, after Paul Scholes' well-taken goal for United, from Cole's fine cross, the match improved immensely. Villa deserved Julian Joachim's equaliser for their subsequent brio even if the goal was fortuitous, the ball looping over Schmeichel after hitting Denis Irwin's shin.

much-vaunted "English-only" policy does not prevent internal disharmony. While injuries (Mark Bosnich, Merson) and suspension (Stan Collymore) accounted for three senior players, three others, Mark Draper, the transfer-listed Riccardo Scimeca, and Gary Charles, who is said to have been involved in a training-ground dispute with Gregory, were "out of favour".

This may be inevitable in a strong squad, but it is unhealthy for a championship-chasing one. One of a good No 2's tasks is to act as a buffer between the manager and disaffected players and, with a demanding week ahead, Harrison may have to brush down his joke book.

Goals: Scholes (47) 0-1; Joachim (53) 1-1. Aston Villa (3-5-2): Oakes, Ehiogu, Soler, Barry, Watson, Hendrie, Taylor, Thompson, Whelan, Joachim. Substitutes not used: Merson, Cole (69), Schmeichel, Vassall, Ferrante, Grayson. Manchester United (4-4-2): Schmeichel, Brown, G. Neville, Solskjær, Irvin, Butt, Scholes, Giggs, Butt, Teddy Sheringham and Ronny Johnsen. In the bench Villa had the unheralded Simon Grayson and four unknowns. This, it transpired, was partly due to Gregory finding that his

referee: M. Riley (Leeds); S. Taylor (Aston Villa); Ugo Ehiogu (Manchester United); Neville, York, Irvin. Man of the match: Thompson and Hendrie. Attendance: 39,241

Kidd may be the man for all seasons

BY DAVE HADFIELD

Blackburn Rovers 1
Charlton Athletic 0

AT 49 and counting, Brian Kidd still looks like the slightly older brother of the fresh-faced youth who looped that header over the Benfica goalkeeper 30 years ago.

That might indicate that, at a Premiership club, it is the No 1, rather than the No 2, who is paid to do the bulk of the worrying.

In that case, it will be instructive to do a "before and after" - comparing one of the many pictures taken of Kidd at Ewood Park on Saturday with a portrait, say, two years down the road.

Despite this urgently needed victory, Blackburn remain the sort of side that could give their new manager all the things he currently lacks - grey hair, a furrowed brow, bags under the eyes. He got a taste of the strain they could put him under even as they secured a morale-boosting win.

Kidd, not scheduled to take control until today, had planned to observe quietly from the stand. It took all of 16 minutes of watching Rovers perform with little pattern and less confidence to send him scurrying down to the touchline.

It looked little better from down there but it at least gave him chance to get involved to an extent that brought a warning from Graham Poll.

Although he tried to confuse the referee by changing coats for the second half, Kidd's vocal contribution apparently extracted a confession from Poll that it must be him and not Alex Ferguson who has been responsible for the notorious racket from the bench at Old Trafford.

The overriding impression of Kidd before, during and after the match was one of a barely sustainable enthusiasm. His ability with players on the training ground is well enough known, but he attacked aspects of the job for which some thought he would be less suited with equal relish.

One of the questions puts up against him concerns his ability to deal with the media spotlight. But his performance in that department was all the more impressive for the self-deprecating humour that accompanied it.

"Nobody wanted the coach to be rubbing his guns at United," he said, employing an old Collyhurst expression to explain his apparent reticence in the past. But morose in the limelight? Averse to having a chat and a laugh with those outside his immediate orbit? Not a hit of it.



Striker Kevin Davies beats the tackle of Charlton's Richard Rufus to score his first goal for Blackburn Rovers (above) and earn their enthusiastic manager Brian Kidd (below) a victory in his first match in charge of the struggling Ewood Park side

Not that Blackburn's current situation is any laughing matter, even with Saturday's three points hoisting them off the foot of the table. "From Premier League champions in 1995 to this - there's obviously been a problem. But you only get John when people are having a rough time."

Despite the encouragement he drew from the efforts of young players like Damien Duff, David Dunn and, especially, the enterprising Damien Johnson, Kidd saw enough to suggest why times have been rough.

Even opponents as badly out of the winning habit as Charlton could

have left Ewood with all three points, given an equal share of luck. Blackburn's Alan Fettis, a third-choice goalkeeper called up on the morning of the match because John Filan was suffering from concussion, was far busier than Sasa Ilic.

Unfortunately for Alan Curbishley's peace of mind, he made a complete mess of the one real save he was called on to make, letting Kevin Davies' shot slip under his body with 15 minutes to play.

It was a fluky way for the Davies to score his first Blackburn goal since his £7.5m transfer from Southampton. He would not even

have been on the field if Kevin

Gallacher had not succumbed to a hamstring injury late in the first half and he showed no sign of becoming a match-winner until his speculative strike made Kidd's first afternoon a happy one.

Kidd admitted that it was with one eye on the calendar that he found Blackburn's advances so irresistible. "I think you can leave it too late," he said of his decision to become his own boss. "I don't want to die wondering. It's been well documented that I'm 50 in the summer. I hope I get some good presents."

It might have been a few months

early, but this could count as a down payment. Other gifts will

have to be worked for - starting on Kidd's natural terrain of the training pitch today.

"That's what I feel I'm here for. I hope they don't want a PR man," he said. The early evidence is that he could be equally effective at that side of the job.

Goals: Davies (75) 1-0.

Blackburn Rovers (4-4-2): Potts, Croft, Hendrie, Dally, Davidson; Johnson, Dunn (Brooks), 83); Duff, Poll, Power; Duff (Harper), 72); Soler, Ehiogu, Gallacher, 60). Substitutes not used: Marcellin, Taylor, Williams, 69). Charlton Athletic (4-4-2): Ric, Mills, Rufus, Yorke, Power; Robinson, Kinsella, Redfearn, Mortimer (Newton), 51); Hunt, 60; Conlon (S. Jones), 66). Substitutes not used: Clarke, Barnes, Nev, Royce (g). Referee: G. Poll (Tring).

Bookings: Blackburn: Dunn, Charlton: Redfearn, Kinsella, Yorke.

Man of the match: Johnson.

Attendance: 22,569.

Empics

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Empics

Gunners keep firing blanks

BY PETER CONCHIE

Derby County 0
Arsenal 0

IT WAS more than a touch of frost on a chilly afternoon in the East Midlands, but it did not take David Jason to work out the failings of Arsène Wenger's depleted side. Of the Arsenal players who started the match only two, Nicolas Anelka and Marc Overmars, had contributed to their unimpressive total of 15 League goals this season.

That the game would finish goal-free was sadly predictable. Arsenal's lack of firepower was matched by their opponents who have an identical goals-for figure, while the Gunners have conceded just seven goals this season, the lowest total in all four divisions. Derby, meanwhile, employed three centre-halves and two additional wing-backs, although neither Dorigo nor Delap advanced much beyond the half-way line. This was partly thanks to Nelson Vivas, an able replacement for Nigel Winterburn, who pushed into the space left by Derby's three-man midfield.

Renewal is, of course, Wenger's dilemma as he negotiates the inevitable replacement of the old guard. "That's my biggest worry - when they don't play any more," he confirmed. "To keep that spirit will

sheets at the back and hoping we can scratch a goal. It's not so different from the George Graham era."

Goalless it may have been, but Derby had chances to score in the first half. One arose after Lee Dixon was pulled off by one of his own players, Alan Fettis, a third-choice goalkeeper called up on the morning of the match because John Filan was suffering from concussion, was far busier than Sasa Ilic.

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SPORT

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Premiership football: Newcastle's substitute needs only 60 seconds to reward Gullit and frustrate North-east rivals

Boro denied by deft Dabizas

BY JOHN DONOGHUE

Middlesbrough 2
Newcastle United 2

IT ONLY takes a minute to change the face of any match, and Nicolas Dabizas proved it to prevent Middlesbrough from reclaiming their place among the group most seriously involved in the pursuit of the Premiership leaders, Aston Villa, yesterday.

Perhaps more in desperation than through any real sense of inspiration Ruud Gullit, the Newcastle manager invited the Greek defender to help save this North-east derby, allotting just seven minutes for the task.

In the event, Dabizas required just a fraction of the time. Sixty seconds after replacing Warren Barton, he met a delightful cross from Laurent Charvet with a spring-heeled jump to head Newcastle level.

Yet surely, Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, should have known better than to expect anything else from such a home-grown contest. In all previous Premiership meetings with Newcastle, number four they have come off second best. So, perversely, this may have to be considered a minor triumph.

In any event, it was the price they had to pay for failing to make the most of their second-half scoring opportunities, which at least helped distinguish Steve Harper as a goalkeeper of genuine promise.

The fightback certainly heartened Gullit who maintained: "This is another step forward for us. Two weeks ago I don't think we would even have scored one goal."

Though Charvet played a more obvious part in saving Newcastle's day, scoring one and making the other, Harper, who was only playing because of an injury to the Republic of Ireland's Shay Given, produced a string of impressive saves. They bought this largely uninspiring Newcastle team some time and thanks to Dabizas they were able to use it.

For a time, it seemed that the



The Middlesbrough striker Hamilton Ricard (left) gets to grips with Newcastle's Steve Howey during yesterday's North-east derby at the Riverside Stadium. Allsport

two female streakers were the ones destined to take the eye when they arrived unannounced just after half-time. And while there are those who continue to maintain that Paul Gascoigne's levels of discipline

remain a worry, he refused to be seduced when one of the space invaders set off in chase of him.

Gascoigne was autographing nothing, and simply ran for cover. If that was one surprise

then the other was that in a stadium so recently constructed under soil heating was not included amongst the facilities to help provide a more amenable surface. But then serious derby conflicts are meant to be

ring, bone hard affairs void of lasting subtlety. A perfect Riverside surface then.

Initially, Middlesbrough looked as though they had the necessary power and focus to make it a one-way affair; espe-

cially in view of Newcastle's frail travelling record. And when after a robust opening period they established a 17th-minute lead Gullit's drenched hope of prolonging deadlock was in pieces.

Gascoigne, who conducted

his pre-match warm-up routine in the company of his two-year-old son Regan, demonstrated that the quality time spent with family members had not been wasted.

It was Gascoigne's quite de-

liberately placed corner which found his intended target, Andy Townsend, in plenty of space 14 yards out. Townsend looked as though he had enough time to consult the match programme before leisurely placing his first goal of the season beyond Harper.

It was hardly the start Gullit wanted, scarcely the one Harper needed in this his first Premiership start. Yet any fears he had about what was to follow abated as Boro failed to build on their lead.

So it was of little surprise that Middlesbrough sacrificed their lead before the first half was over. No surprise, though, that the equaliser was not exactly the product of some fluent move. The cuts and bolts of it were far more common or garish, Middlesbrough making an awful meal of attempting to clear a Keith Gillespie corner. When, at the umpteenth attempt, Dean Gordon headed clear of his area, it was volleyed back spectacularly to give the French defender Charvet his first goal in the black and white of Newcastle.

The arrival of Stephen Glass, from the Newcastle bench, was designed to improve the service to Ferguson, but within 15 minutes of his arrival they were behind again to a scruffy sort of goal. Hamilton Ricard and Colin Cooper were behind the thrust and though Aaron Hughes got half a block on Cooper's shot the deflection served only to limit Harper's saving possibilities.

Not that he could be criticised having earlier performed minor wonders to deny Brian Deane and Townsend goals – and ultimately that helped Newcastle save the match.

Goals: Townsend (1), Gullit (2); Cooper (2); Dabizas (3); Charvet (1); Gascoigne (Stamp, 84); Townsend, Gordon; Ricard, Deane (Bock, 87). Substitutes not used: Roberts (84). Middlesbrough: Barton (2); Harper, Gillespie, Lee, Solano (Glass, 82); Anderson (Dalglish, 76); Ferguson. Substitutes not used: Hamann, Perez (84). Referee: U Rennie (Sheffield). Bookings: Middlesbrough: Vickers. Man of the match: Harper. Attendance: 34,629.

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Leaver will confront the dissidents

PETER LEAVER, the Premier League's chief executive, will test the strength of his support after calling for a meeting yesterday following signs of dissent over his appointments of the former BSkyB executives, Sam Chisholm and David Chance, as media advisers.

Leaver, who has been in his position for 17 months, is said to be in the mood to resign unless there is a powerful expression of faith shown in him by the Premiership's governing body of club chairmen when they meet

BY BILL PIERCE

for the second time in eight days, in London on Thursday.

The barrister and former deputy High Court judge made the unilateral decision to take the pair on board because of their expert knowledge which is certain to come in useful in negotiations for a new television deal, due to take place in the summer.

But six of the member clubs – believed to be Manchester United, Arsenal, Liverpool, Newcastle United, Leeds United and Wimbledon – are said to have expressed reservations about salary inducements offered to Chisholm and Chance.

Leaver believes that making the appointments without having to seek full consultation with

the clubs is within the remit of his job, just as it was to fight off the threat of a breakaway European Super League as proposed by Media Partners in

the summer.

He has refused to say how much Chisholm will be paid, but the six clubs were given the information last week provided they signed a confidentiality agreement.

Speculation puts the figure in excess of £1m, although it is also claimed that the pay award will be linked to the size of the television deal he can negotiate.

And after a confrontation with the six, who demanded the

full details of the appointments after a meeting of the chairmen last Thursday, Leaver has felt obliged to calm the feud by calling another meeting.

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Tottenham

board in the summer – a post he resigned just before last Thursday's meeting of the Premier League chairmen in order to defend the claims by Chisholm and Chance must have of their former employers' made them in Leaver's eyes, prime candidates to head the Premier League negotiating team.

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MONDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

The
sexiest
bloke
on the
box

Steven Mackintosh – great presence, beautiful blue eyes and tipped to be the next Gary Oldman. Lots of women are madly in love with him. Tragically, he's already taken

I think I must have first clocked the actor Steven Mackintosh when he played the mysterious John Rokesmith (alias John Harmon) in the BBC's adaptation of Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*. "Ehmm, he's quite something," I thought. "I like him." Next, it must have been as Joe, the romantic lead in the film *The Land Girls*, which co-starred the disgustingly pretty Anna Friel whom (as part of the plot) he got to sleep with. In fact, he also got to sleep with her in *Our Mutual Friend*, now I think about it, but I chose not to let it bother me on either occasion.

After all, and as my mother always told me, what I lack in looks I more than make up for with bags of something that might be personality, but then again might just be bags. (Tesco, Safeway, Sainsbury, Waitrose, Kwik Save... I compulsively collect them all. God knows why.)

And then, thirdly, it was as the dark, disturbing Tom in the BBC's dark, disturbing cop drama *Undercover Heart*, where he got to sleep with Daniela Nardini, which I didn't mind so much because she's quite big and Scottish and possibly part-horse.

Anyway, by the time *Undercover Heart* came along, I was terribly in love, and practically considered ourselves married, with golden-haired children who happily agreed to wear cute sailor suits and didn't mind when Mummy had to go to Hollywood with Daddy, because Daddy was up for an Oscar, and Mummy had been offered the loan of a dress from Versace. "It was promised to Julie Roberts, actually. Mrs Mackintosh. But as it's you..." Anyway, I think when you get this far with someone, you possibly ought to meet them.

So, astonishingly, I fix it. I say "astonishingly" because, generally, I am as dynamic as a dead slug after it's received a massive cash on the head. But I get his agent's number, and call, and before you know it we are due to meet at the restaurant Granita in Islington.

Granita is a very chic, New Labour sort of place. I arrive first, and am spectacularly nervous. I am looking quite nice, though, in some extraordinarily elegant combat trousers which I thought about ironing until I realised I don't actually have an iron. I think I would have shredded the napkin, had it been possible, but the Granita napkins are linen or something, so I just end up unpicking a few hemms.

There's a fine-looking woman in high heels and a soft, expensive-looking scarlet leather jacket sitting at the next table. When Steven arrives, he makes straight to me! I'm not just some pathetic sardine who

wards her table. "Coo-eee. Over here!" I have to cry. He has to quickly change direction. "You were hoping I was that woman, weren't you?" I say. "I wasn't," he protests. "Were," I say sulkily. "Wasn't!" he repeats. I tell him that if we go on like this, we will have to make an appointment with Relate. Think of the children, Steven! He is starting to look quite frightened.

He is exceptional-looking. He isn't, thankfully, handsome in that overrated, hunky, Tom Cruise sort of way. He is quite small, scrawny even, with girl's hands, yet he has the most beautiful face – serious, intense, wistful, subtly reactive. He has very blue eyes. There is a real kind of power to him. As an actor, he has that certain something which you can't explain because, if you could, he wouldn't have it. It might be a kind of cocktail of vulnerability, danger, intelligence and total fanciability. But, then again, it might not. I mean, what do I know, apart from the fact that Sainsbury bags seem appallingly flimsy in comparison to the Waitrose ones, which seem to be better made all round?

Anyway, I wonder whether he thinks he has a certain quality. At least an astonishing physical presence, if nothing else. He gasps: "God, no. I think of myself as a point-faced weirdo. Too angular, too spindly. I should really do more of the gym thing." He says that sex-scenes always terrify him. He's panic-stricken for weeks beforehand. "It's such a strange thing to do," he says. "And while you're doing it, you're aware that people are ultimately going to see this spindly little thing writhing around on a bed."

He is wearing old jeans, an old woolly jumper that might have come from Oxfam and an old coat that looks very The Red Cross shop on the Holloway Road, and which I think I almost bought once. He is quite creased, too. "I don't have an iron either," he admits, which makes me even more certain that we have a great future together. He is wearing a chain around his neck with a chunk of stone threaded on to it – "It's a lucky stone I found on a beach in Suffolk" – and a silver identity bracelet that my wife saw in a shop in Norfolk.

Your wife, Steven? "Yes, my wife saw it in a shop in Norfolk and..." YOUR WIFE, STEVEN! "Yes, my wife saw it in a..." OK, how long has this been going on? "Well, we just celebrated our 10th anniversary and..." CHILDREN, STEVEN? "Two girls, Martha, six, and Blythe, two." So you were trapped early, then? "My family are the most important thing to me," he protests. Yes! Yes! I cry. I feel the same!

My family are the most important thing to me! I'm not just some pathetic sardine who



THE DEBORAH ROSS
INTERVIEW

lives surrounded by supermarket carrier bags and falls for blokes off the telly, you know! I, too, have a very rich family life. Although, that said, if you did want someone to go to the Oscars with you, I could possibly manage it. He says hang on, he's only just acquired an agent on the West Coast. "And I haven't even ever been to LA yet!"

He's 31 now, but made his stage debut at 12 at London's Bush Theatre, and has been working consistently since. In *Prick Up Your Ears*, the celebrated film of Joe Orton's life, he played young Joe in the childhood flashback scenes. In the Adrian Mole television series, he was Adrian's trainer-obsessed mate Nigel. More recently, it was as a scary, murderous nutter who fed his victims to his dogs in *Prime Suspect 5*, plus major film roles in *Blue*

Juice and *Lock Stock & Two Smoking Barrels*. I think, now, he is possibly on the brink of being HUGE. I think, shordy, he'll be up there with Gary Oldman and Tim Roth and Ralph Fiennes and all the other English actors who have that certain inner stillness, which Hollywood so loves.

He, however, insists that he has no ambition in this direction. "I'd like to do a contemporary London thing, working with like-minded people, possibly through improvisation," he says, in his sweet, rather earnest way.

Fame? Does that attract you? He says he has just reached the point where people are clocking him in the street. It's OK, but quite disturbing, especially as most can't quite remember where they've seen him before. "So it's 'We're you at Leicester Poly with me in 1982? You were, weren't you? Don't deny it!'

We have a very nice lunch. He is a very real bloke. He's a woman's bloke, I think. He lives locally, near Arsenal football ground, but isn't interested in football in the least. He lives almost entirely with females. Even his dog is a girl. The only other men in the household are some fish. "My guppies. And the males are after the females 24 hours a day, trying to impregnate them. All the girl fish look as if they're thinking: 'Sugger off. You've had me already!'" He says he cried when his daughters were born. "Just this uncons

trollable sobbing, because they were so beautiful." We talk a lot about his daughters. Blythe, he says, has fabulous chubby cheeks. Martha wants a doll's house for Christmas. Martha's brilliantly girly and invites her father to endless mock little tea parties.

Martha's a bit upset at the moment, though, because her friend Jessica has told her fairies don't really exist. Steven has had to convince her that maybe they do. We agree that children are wonderful, because they can be so easily duped. I tell him that if his daughter ever asks where God lives, for example, he might want to say he lives over Waitrose on the Holloway Road, with six angels who act as a remote for the telly, and a cat called Louise. I add that I told this to my own son once, and it satisfied his curiosity until he was at least 17.

Steven says he knows this particular Waitrose well. It's where he does his weekly shop. I say, if you want to come back afterwards, see my Waitrose bag collection, you'd be most welcome. He says with great regret that he has to pick Martha up from somewhere shortly. He is truly disappointed, I think.

He was born and brought up in Sawston, which is just outside Cambridge. He feels no great attachment to the place. "I think it might have been a fairly pretty place once, with 13 pubs on the high street. But then it became one big Sixties housing de

velopment, and very new-towny. Our house was one of those standard Sixties, Legos-shaped things." His mother, Dorothy, is an office worker, while his father, Malcolm, is a builder. He has one sister, Linda, who is now a childminder. He says his first passion was not for the theatre or anything, but music. He used to have this wind-up gramophone, he says, which he called his "thirty bob" because it cost him thirty bob, and he carried it everywhere with him. It may have been a kind of early ghetto-blaster. He loved the "cheap end of disco music – Sister Sledge, Boney M – before graduating to Pink Floyd, and writing their names all over my denim jacket, and all that rubbish."

Steven is still music-mad, and spends most of his money on CDs. "I have finally trained myself to be able to walk past a CD shop. Sometimes."

He thought at one time that he might be a rock star. He taught himself the guitar a bit. He sang a bit. But then he discovered that he was a good mimic.

However, he says that, as a boy, he was quite awkward and shy and uncomfortable in his own skin. He didn't easily make friends, he says, until he discovered a gift for mimicry, which made him quite popular at school. He is, he admits, the absolute cliché of the actor who became an actor because he found it easier being someone

Continued on page 8

Space for dreams

Sir: Almost thirty years ago a young boy, like millions of others around the world, sat in a darkened room as a ghostly black and white figure descended to the lunar surface. As a NASA employee for six years I saw the same passionate look I had back in 1969 in the faces of youngsters at Space Camp as they saw the present-day shuttle.

I feel very sorry for Charles Arthur ("A waste of space", 4 December) in that he can only see investment in the International Space Station (ISS) in terms of money. I doubt whether many of those schoolchildren will ever be as inspired by investments in stocks and shares as much as by the space programme?

He admits that Mars Surveyor was a "spectacular success" but then goes on to say it showed Mars to be a "dead, cold, rocky desert". So what? A negative result in science is as good as a positive one.

Nasa's annual budget (around \$14bn the last time I looked) is a relatively small part of the US government's spending, considerably smaller than social security, housing and defence.

It is those with vision, big ideas and dreams that alter our world and not those that sit and criticise. MARK F SMITH
Charbury, Oxfordshire

Sir: The cradle of Earth cannot sustain life indefinitely, whether the end comes by our own hands, astronomical misfortune or the ageing of our own Sun. For life to survive we must explore and conquer space. The space race is against time itself and the stakes are the highest imaginable. Is Mr Arthur truly denying the meaning of all life since the beginning of time for a few billion dollars? The ISS is a stepping stone to all our futures, not some self-serving public relations exercise. MICHAEL de WHALLEY
Grimston, Norfolk

Sir: Your leading article ("Place no bounds on our quest for knowledge" (21 November)) managed to explore every penny-pinching cliché in favour of abandoning the space station project.

Had NASA and the politicians who fund it more courage it would long ago have become clear that the debate goes far beyond these banalities and in fact concerns the future of our species. Within the next century we will have exhausted our poor planet's resources; if by then provision has not been made to accommodate some of us in space, we will become extinct.

This debate does not concern an accountant's narrow preoccupation with value for money; it is not about some "quest for knowledge", as you put it. The issue could not be more fundamental; your paper should be digging deep for facts, not worriedly wringing its hands over the dollars involved – unless, of course, someone has discovered the secret of spending money when dead.

P EVANS
Pritton-on-Sea, Essex

Sir: If Charles Arthur really does begrudge the money that the space station will cost each European then I will gladly send him a cheque for the £1 a week it will cost (assuming the space station has a life span of 20 years).

Likewise his belief that the Mars explorations are a failure due to the (so far) lack of evidence of life is surely misguided. He no doubt would also count the ascent of Everest as it failed to find a branch of McDonald's open on the summit.

Exploration has always been a driving force in man's history and long may it continue to do so. Mr Arthur is welcome to stay at home darning his socks. JOHN LOWRY
Kenilworth, Warwickshire

Sir: Charles Arthur suggests that the International Space Station is

a costly white elephant, and merely an exercise in public relations. I think there is an altogether more pragmatic reason for the project.

Is it purely coincidence that projects such as the ISS and the proposed manned missions to Mars only really got off the ground when global warming became an undeniable threat? Or are they part of a multi-trillion-dollar insurance policy for the great and good of the new world order?

MARK SIMPSON
Birmingham

Send him to Spain

Sir: Patricia Ann Wilson asks whether the "Spanish should be the ones to judge another on the matter of crimes against humanity" (letter, 4 December). She makes an ill-advised and offensive comparison between the Spanish people of the late 20th century and General Pinochet. Ms Wilson must believe that Spain remains unchanged since Pizarro and Cortes.

Acts against the indigenous peoples of North America, Africa, India and Australia by Britain, which in some instances continued well into this century, were, if anything, even more shameful.

The degree of autonomy granted to the Basque country since the death of Franco in 1976 (such as fiscal autonomy and its own police force), far exceeds that which is enjoyed in Northern Ireland or which is planned for Scotland and Wales. Ms Wilson seems unaware that the vast majority of the Basques wish to remain Spanish and are supportive of the fight against ETA.

If it was not for the foresight of a Spanish judge not only would we now not be engaging in a debate over where Pinochet should be tried but he would now be back in Santiago happily enjoying a Chilean summer. The Spanish courts should be congratulated for their courage.

I for one am far happier for Pinochet to be tried under Spanish jurisdiction than in a country such as the UK with such close ties of friendship and commerce with Chile.

MARSH PENNINGTON
London W9

Sir: Martin Cadman's logic, comparing Pinochet's case with that of the Libyans accused of the Lockerbie bombing, is totally awry (letter, 4 December). Pinochet committed his crimes in Chile and so, it is argued, should be tried there. The bombers committed their crimes elsewhere, including Scotland, and so there would be no inconsistency in maintaining the demand the two accused Libyans be tried in Scotland or a European court.

MERVYN BENFORD
Banbury, Oxfordshire

Sir: Pinochet did give back power to the people peacefully. If the extradition process goes on, the message for all dictators still ruling their countries is very clear: whatever you do, hold on to power for the rest of your life.

ALFREDO BARRIGA
Santiago, Chile

Supermarket terror

Sir: The ending of the worldwide ban on British beef is extremely welcome. However it would be easy to be under the misconception that all our troubles are over, far from it.

At present, we livestock farmers are failing to get a market price high enough to cover the cost of production, a problem which can be remedied if only the supermarkets' ruthless reign of terror brought to an end. The supermarkets have been far too



Winter visitors No 1: The cold weather sets birdwatchers' pulses racing at Snettisham, on the Norfolk coast, where waders and waterfowl arrive in their thousands to overwinter David Rose

quick to capitalise on the regrettable shortsightedness of some farmers who sell their livestock directly into supermarket-owned abattoirs, bypassing the live market system.

The supermarkets set a seductive price for livestock just above the average live market price. Premium livestock are

tempted away from the market system, leaving only the animals which do not meet their specifications. This results in a lowering of the market average price the following week – the price from which the supermarkets will go on to base their subsequent premium. Every week that follows, the downward

spiral continues, with lamb prices now at rock bottom.

For the many livestock markets which work on a commission basis the loss of throughput could well see the end of the live auction system. The supermarkets will then achieve a price monopoly.

The crash in farm gate prices for livestock has led to the loss of

Sir: Philip Hensher's diatribe against C S Lewis's children's stories ("Don't let your children go to Narnia", 4 December) has all the qualities be despises, moral bullying and smug self-satisfaction.

His final bon mot, "Give them anything else – *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, a bottle of vodka, a phial of prussic acid, even *Winnie the Pooh* – but keep them away from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* – smacks of the most tedious kind of schoolboy wisecracking. No one cares if Philip Hensher likes Narnia; many adults do not.

Children do. Why take it away from them because of priggish right-thinking?

MEGAN McGILCHRIST
London W13

Sir: Philip Hensher obviously has not been bothered to read *A Grief Observed*, a work that has not only helped me in my bereavements (I am an

orphan), but has also helped many others. It was not written by someone "mean and narrow-minded", let alone a misogynist.

ISOBEL MONTGOMERY
CAMPBELL
London W13

Sir: Oscar Wilde, who had affairs with members of both sexes, not to mention an apparently (if his own letters are to be believed) passionate marriage, would be more accurately described as bisexual than gay ("It's got to go", 1 December).

KAREN ABBOTT
Somerset, New Jersey, USA

Sir: Michael Brown's comparison (*The Week in Parliament*, 5 December) of the "cost" of my questions and the amount paid to ministers in

severance payments is a false one. My questions cost nothing – the cost is a theoretical one. Not a single civil servant has been taken on to answer them, and not one would have been made redundant had I not done so. The £106,652 paid to ex-ministers, however, is real taxpayers' money.

NORMAN BAKER MP
(Lewes, Lib Dem)
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: J G Cunningham (letter, 3 December) should look again at the latest hardbacks. The pages are folded, allowing the book to open flat. But they are not sewn.

This is no doubt a cheaper production than before. The main disadvantage of perfect bound books nowadays is that it is difficult to avoid creasing the spine or opening the book for the first time.

J JOCELYN
Glasgow

Sir: To David Blunkett is to assess the success of teachers, and reward them accordingly, on the basis of their achievements, or otherwise, of their pupils he is surely neglecting another vital part of the equation. Research suggests that 50 per cent of the performance of a child in school is dependent upon his/her parenting. Are parents, therefore, going to be similarly evaluated for the amount of child benefit they receive as a consequence of their children's results at school?

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Animal welfare is a good cause, but it needs no martyrs

BY THE time you read this, Barry Horne may be dead. His chances of survival are certainly slim. He would not be quite the first martyr of the modern animal rights movement: Jill Phipps was crushed under the wheels of a lorry exporting live calves to the Continent four years ago. However he is the first to choose to die for the cause. Such passionate belief in the rightness of a cause demands an answer.

Mr Horne is fasting in protest at the Labour Government's failure to set up a Royal Commission to examine the issue of experiments on animals. It is true that the Labour Party has broken the spirit of its pre-election promise. In 1996, Tony Blair put his name to a document called "New Labour: New Life for Animals" which said: "We will support a Royal Commission to review the effectiveness and justification of animal experiments and to examine alternatives." This pledge was not repeated in the manifesto, but it was referred to obliquely: "We have advocated new measures to promote animal welfare," the manifesto declared.

Now, however, ministers say a Royal Commission would be too expensive and might delay action. It is an argument that would carry more weight if there were any action to delay, so far the Government has managed to end the testing of cosmetics on animals, which accounted for just 250 rabbits, guinea pigs and rats out of a total of 2.7 million animals a year. And, while it is true that Royal Commissions are cumbersome - they "take minutes and waste years", as Harold Wilson said - no other way of assessing the need for animal experiments has been set up.

This is regrettable, less from the point of view of cruelty to animals than because it provides a grievance against which extreme measures can be mobilised. If the Prime Minister had announced a review, it would have been a chance to educate the public about the balance that has to be made between the welfare of humans and that of other animals. As it is, the cry of "betrayal" provides moral fuel for the arsonists, saboteurs and hunger strikers of the animal rights movement, while giving them little incentive to consider the detail of complex public policy.

And fanaticism is a dangerous thing. Absolutism in pursuit of rights which are not absolute, such as those of animals, can never be justified.

It leads to the kind of illogic which ends up with the release of mink to slaughter wildlife and to die painful deaths or with the argument that the lives of scientists who use animals to alleviate human suffering are less important than those of mice. The responsible wing of the animal rights movement must ensure that the tragedy of Mr Horne does not become a greater one.



Neither a gazumper nor a gazunderer be

WE SHOULD be wary of Hilary Armstrong today, when the housing minister announces measures designed to make the buying and selling of houses easier, cheaper and faster. These are laudable objectives. And there is no doubt that the business of conveyancing is more difficult, expensive and slow than it need be, and that this works against a fair market in the most expensive things most people ever buy.

But house-hunting can never be reduced to the simplicity and efficiency of buying baked beans, precisely because houses are large, complex things and the amounts of money involved are so big. Many of the quick fixes are misguided. The Scottish system of sealed bids does not guarantee the best price. The idea of a "log book" for every house is flawed:

who would compile it and to whom would they be liable if it turned out to be misleading?

There are two ideas which, if they appear in Ms Armstrong's plans, should be welcomed. One is that sellers should be forced to compensate prospective purchasers if they "gazump" - that is, accept a higher offer after agreeing a price. Equally, buyers should not be allowed to "gazunder" - drop the price before exchanging. The other is that surveyors should be made liable to anyone who relies on a survey, not just the person who commissioned it. This would enable sellers to have surveys done for any prospective buyer.

What is depressing is that the proposals should be necessary at all. Making the market work better does not appear to require any changes in the law. The legal and surveying professions have been slow to innovate. If Ms Armstrong can give them a kick to get them to cut the three months it takes on average to buy a house, it will be justified intervention in the supposedly free market.

Lost for words

WHEN GERHARD Schröder, the new German Chancellor, appealed for common sense in the row over hidden state subsidies in the form of tax breaks - or the "Hun plot to put up our taxes", in the Eurosceptic press - we were brought up short when the English word "fairness" suddenly dropped up in the middle of a sentence full of umlauts and initial capitals. Apparently, there is no exact German word that means "fairness", so Mr Schröder did what most Germans do, which is to use the English one. The Eurosceptic press will no doubt put this fact in the same category of xenophobic myths as the claim that there is no word for "sorry" in Japanese, or that there is no word for "snow" in the Inuit language. But before they go too far they should reflect that there are some things for which there is no word in English, for all its polyglot inheritance - *laissez-faire* being perhaps the most apt example.

When will New Labour face up to the truth about taxes?



STEVE RICHARDS

It is just possible that Europe will provide a camouflage for some tax rises in years to come

"SHOCK HORROR! Train fares to rise by 21 per cent..." Yes, it's that grim time of year when our privatised rail companies announce their fares for next year. The annual ritual has become as familiar as the switching on of Christmas lights in high streets around the country. For 11 months of the year, there are reports highlighting the appalling train services endured by travellers. The year's end is greeted with news of huge fare rises. Here we go again?

Not quite. The story is more complicated than the perennial tales about hunging privatised companies seeking bigger profits.

Of course, no one in their right minds would leap to the defence of the millionaire incompetents who run these services. With their stories about the "wrong type of snow" and the like, the rail bosses convert me to the fleeting advocacy of capital punishment, maybe committed to enforced incarceration on a train from London to Blackpool, something that would take up most of the rest of their natural lives. But a much wider question has to be asked of those fare increases: what did we expect?

For there is a blindingly obvious connection between the amount the government is willing to spend on train services and the level of the fares. If the subsidy shrinks there is only the fare-payer to make up for the shortfall. No doubt there are savings to be made through efficiencies, and quite clearly the old nationalised British Rail was no model on which to base a decent service. But in the end there is no getting away from it. In France

and Germany governments spend more on trains so the fares are lower and the services are more reliable. In Britain we have opted for a system where the fare, which takes into account of a person's ability to pay or the benefits to road users from travellers opting to take trains, has replaced higher government spending.

This, along with less than inspired management, is why Britain has a shambolic privatised railway network. It stands as a totem to the country's inability to have a mature debate about taxation and spending. The former Conservative transport minister, Stephen Norris, has admitted as much. He suggests that the main reason for his support of rail privatisation was despair at the prospect of getting any more money out of the Treasury. Either a publicly owned system withered through lack of funds or they handed it over to the private sector. But why were there no funds? Because the ground was being prepared by the Major government for pre-election tax cuts.

This has had an intriguing and irrational side-effect in Britain's hysterical debate about Europe. The most woeful voters in the world, the Middle Englanders, head for France for their holidays. There they are impressed with the efficiency of French trains. Then they return to Britain, phone up Nicky Campbell on Five Live to declare that the rest of Europe is jealous of the British way of life and wants to take it over. The next day they head for Calais because prices in supermarkets are much lower than in Britain. Well Middle England, the

British supermarkets would not be able to get away with it if Britain was in the euro. The differences would be too transparent.

The row over Europe that erupted last week will do so again this week, when William Hague will be dusting down the questions he would - and should - have asked Tony Blair in the Commons last Wednesday before he decided the time had come to defend his hereditary peer. Indeed it is because Europe has now become linked with tax that Hague is actually on potentially fruitful territory. When it is Europe alone the Tories always risk another bout of internal fighting. But on tax and spend the party of the right is united.

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have endorsed tax as an issue at the last election by taking the drastic step of

pledging not to raise income tax for the whole parliament. This was a shrewd move because income tax had become an irrational symbol in British politics, as if all that mattered was a party's attitude towards it. As Michael Meacher pointed out in an interview with me a short time before the election, there were plenty of other ways of raising taxes.

The reason the spin doctors reacted with horror to Meacher's endearing candour was that he happened to be right. With considerable stealth, the Treasury has found other cash-raising measures. However, there is a limit to the number of times that Gordon Brown can find discreet ways of doing this, a privatisation here, a tax on pen-

ions there. This is what prompted the Fabian Society, to set up a commission under Lord Plant to review Britain's tax system. Downing Street was not pleased at the news, which shows how primitive our debate on taxation remains. The prospect of Lord Plant declaring that some taxes may have to rise sends shivers down Blairite spines. But the commission will not be recommending a return to "Old Labour" policies of interventionism in failing industries or excessive spending without accompanying efficiencies. It may recommend other ways of raising tax in order to fund a modern welfare state and other services. If Britain could only have a rational debate, no one should be afraid of that.

To some extent Brown has moved the debate on from the pre-election madness. He talks now of a "tax and spend" strategy, which implies that taxpayers will get something back for their money. This is why the reforms in education and health are important. Crucially, voters need to see tangible improvements to accompany the cash pumped into these services.

But the debate is still at a desperately early stage. How will Labour respond, for example, to the following scenario? In January 2001, months before a likely election, the shadow chancellor Peter Lilley goes on the Today programme and announces that a Tory government would cut the basic rate of income tax by 2p in the pound to be paid for by cuts in the social security budget and other efficiencies. William Hague declares:

"We prefer to let the voters decide how to spend their money, rather than a nanny state and Tony's cronies spending it for them." Unless the debate matures a little in the coming years, Brown may feel obliged to follow suit and take part in a tax-cutting auction. It is too late to do much about the railways. They were privatised long ago, but other services demand levels of spending which should rule out such an option.

There is, though, a twist to the hysteria of recent weeks. While Blair and Brown are right to challenge the excesses of Oscar Lafontaine, it is just possible that Europe will provide a camouflage for some necessary tax increases in the years to come. If we are limited to taxation by stealth, we might as well let Brussels, if not our trains, take some of the strain.

Steve Richards is political editor of

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It feels me with gloom that William Hague's office seems to be intent on poisoning Robert Cranborne's reputation" Lord Fraser, former deputy leader of the Tory peers

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Opinions which justify cruelty are inspired by cruel impulses" Bertrand Russell, philosopher



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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
The Sunday newspapers reflect on
William Hague's position

dust has settled, it will be Mr Hague's principled toughness rather than the carnage on the red benches that will remain in the public mind. *The Sunday Telegraph*

MR HAGUE's critics delude themselves if they think he can be replaced before the next general election. The Tories have to decide: do they want to give Labour a free run into the next election or do they want to put up a decent fight?

If the latter, then they had better start behaving like a proper opposition. *The Sunday Times*

WILLIAM HAGUE's chief function seems to be to make Blair look sincere and authentic, which is quite something. No wonder the Tories are looking at Ann Widdecombe as an alternative. She, unfortunately, is frighteningly real. *(Suzanne Moore)* *The Mail on Sunday*

WILLIAM HAGUE was never more than a smart-alec debater. That was his downfall, for he tried to be too smart with Tony Blair.

Mr Hague has failed himself, his party and his country. But it is not entirely his fault. The internal warfare and infighting among Tory MPs led them to pick a boy to do a man's job.

Now we see the farcical and tragic consequences. *Sunday Mirror*

THE WEEK which ought to have been William Hague's best turned out to be his worst. Mr Hague made a bad tactical misjudgement at Prime Minister's Question Time by attacking Mr Blair solely over the aborted deal which Lord Cranborne had agreed.

Not only did he miss an opportunity to torment the Government over the EU's tax plans. He fatally underestimated the Prime Minister's insouciance when accused of

breaking his own principles. But this does not mean the Tory leader acted wrongly once the crisis erupted. Lord Cranborne charmingly compared himself to an "ill-trained spaniel". Abandoning hunting metaphor; one might more pertinently describe his actions as devious, disloyal, two-timing, arrogant and mendacious.

We suspect that when the

PANDORA

ALUN MICHAEL bid to become leader of the Welsh Assembly took a double blow last week. In his role as Secretary of State for Wales, Michael held a public meeting in Newport last Friday, when only 25 people turned up. The meeting was the first in Michael's devolution tour of Wales, designed to "engage with people directly all over Wales", and a convenient bandwagon for his leadership ambitions. In recent weeks Michael's campaign for assembly leader has been boosted by the appearances of both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, but Michael's opponent, Rhodri Morgan, has shown determination in the protracted campaign for the post and enjoys popular grassroots support. As if the poor turn-out at his own showcase meeting were not bad enough for Michael, elsewhere in the same building (the Newport Civic Centre), members of the Newport West Constituency Labour Party voted 23-3 to back Rhodri Morgan as their choice of assembly leader.

A MOTION to be debated at the Liberal Democrats' spring conference in Edinburgh next March suggests that ordinary Lib Dem Party members should elect a panel of potential nominees to the House of Lords and that the party's leader, Paddy Ashdown, would then choose the final nominees from that panel. The motion is bound to cause controversy. When Pandora spoke to the leader of the Lib Dem peers, Lord Rodgers, he sounded a warning: "It is entirely premature to mess with areas like this in the current climate, where one cannot predict what will happen. There may not be any more Liberal Democrat peers in the future."

THE NEW Penguin Book of Art Writing mistakenly acknowledges the "late RB Kitaj", and thus puts a macabre twist on an old art world tale. Kitaj, a leading member of the school of London with Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon,

harboured a notorious hatred of art critics after his 1994 retrospective at the Tate Gallery was panned. The hurt caused was augmented when, later that year, Kitaj's wife died. Kitaj proclaimed of his critics: "They tried to kill me. They got her instead." Two years later, Kitaj's *The Critic Kill* was exhibited at the Royal Academy, a testimony to his accusation. A Penguin spokeswoman told Pandora that "apologies have been issued to those concerned".

THE BACKLASH against Alanis Morissette (pictured) has found itself a focus. For those tiring of the Canadian songstress' angst-ridden lyrics, why not try the Alanis Morissette Lyric Generator (www.brunching.com)? This Internet gizmo allows the user to punch in a list of their own hang-ups and have them turned into a new set of lyrics accompanied by Alanis's music. It is the idea of one David Neilsen who dreamt it up after buying Morissette's latest album, *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie*. Neilsen tells *Entertainment Weekly*: "After I listened to it, I thought she should pay me for a therapy session. If I could have just one result from this, it would be that Alanis would say: 'Hmm, maybe I will just get over it.'"

PANDORA ENTERS the second week of the Tony Banks vigil. Despite the publication of *The Wit and Wisdom of Tony Banks*, the opinion of the great man on this work has been sadly lacking. Further excerpts are obviously required: "I got pretty pissed at university and I've never been pissed like that since. Over the years as an MP your tolerance builds up. I'm hardened. I'm no hairshirt socialist. I like to relax and I like relaxing with a drink."

FOR THOSE concerned that the European issue might be hard to explain to voters at any future referendum,

Pandora has the perfect antidote.

Proving that integration can be easy is this note to a European Commission directive on employee involvement: "The Commission's view is that, quite apart from the intrinsic dimension represented by the actual impact of a given Community action, the question as to whether an action is consistently with the principle of subsidiarity must be seen in the light of its merit in terms of the context, objectives and actual content of the proposed rule, to establish whether in fact that action is necessary to achieve the objective of the Treaty." Nuff said?

HURRICANE OSKAR has come and gone, but there is little evidence that the damage it inflicted on the British public has met with particular sympathy or even attention in the "near abroad" - that is, continental Europe. Germans, for one, are too busy figuring out what Oskar Lafontaine, Oskar the Ominous, is up to at home never mind his exploits abroad.

The lean and hungry man from Saarbrücken, who has found being German finance minister an unorthodox route to stardom, seems about as deaf at diplomacy as Lady Macbeth would have been at nursing. But while it may be alright to barge forward within your own family in the Lafontaine fashion, we used to be more circumspect when our neighbour's turf was involved.

Not so any more. Why, members of the German government last week not only rubbed a couple of natural allies in Westminster up the wrong way, they were also, so it would appear, totally oblivious of their own head of state travelling to the sceptre's Isle at the same time - the first state visit to the United Kingdom by a German president in

11 years. No tacit agreement seems to have been in place beforehand to give their own president a bit of a breathing space for the short duration of his trip to Britain.

Lafontaine's interventions and the subsequent communiqué at the Franco-German summit, combined with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's ruminations a day later ("I must stress that the finance

minister has the backing of the government") made predictably sure that this particular state visit was practically dead on arrival. Maybe that is just as well. Maybe that's the way these rituals will go in the ever-closer Europe we are building. Where is the sovereignty that used to lend meaning to the state act of ceremonial exchanges of

rights is concerned, and rightly so. That to me, is the real story behind the Lafontaine brouhaha of the last few weeks. We do mind each other's business all the time now, perish the thought. We intervene constantly in the affairs of our neighbours, it has become the divine right of European politics. It's all in the family. So, perhaps, we might as well stop getting so het up about it and look the unpleasant truth squarely in the face. When you forge a common currency it is natural to think, for example, that the policies of Italy or Belgium become too important for everyone's budgetary concerns to be left to the Italians or Belgians alone.

It was Germany that first brought this state of affairs to Europe-wide attention when, under Helmut Kohl's stewardship, it drove the EU to distraction with its insistence on an absolutist definition of monetary stability as a prerequisite to giving up the vaunted Deutsche Mark for the Euro.

The fact that the new government seems to have moved dramatically away from this priority, paying more attention instead to job creation

and a (hoped for) more politically amenable European Central Bank does not alter the nature of the game. Get set and get on people's nerves. We are all in one boat now, and berating laggards, not to mention governments that, with their veto, want to stop the rest of the EU from integrating as it pleases, has become the new rule by which we play in the Premier League of neo-interventionism.

You ain't seen nothing yet. In the new Europe everyone's business will be everyone else's. This must be a particularly bitter pill to swallow for an island people proudly independent for over 900 years. All we can hope for is that Europeans, while they are building a culture of constant encroachment on each other's sensitivities, do not lose their sportsmanship into the bargain. That, I am sure, is easier said than done. It would be a disaster if, by getting ever closer, we ultimately end up being too close for comfort. The Lafontaine episode makes me wonder.

Thomas Kielinger is the UK correspondent for *Die Welt*



THOMAS
KIELINGER

You ain't seen nothing.
In the new Europe,
everyone's business will
be everyone else's

Get used to the meddling Germans

The strange story of the ambassador's missing letter



ANDREAS
WHITTAM
SMITH

The state never explains,
never apologises, and its
high servants won't be
denied their rewards

THIS INCIDENT took place in a Third World country with which the United Kingdom has close relations. When I first read the full report of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, I guessed that it was in the Middle East, probably not Saudi Arabia, but a neighbour. At all events the work which a British company did for the government of this country was considered so important that our ambassador at the time made it his business to keep in close touch. He was wont to remind the chief executive that "the British embassy, under successive ambassadors, has played a major role in establishing and maintaining the company's position in this country".

Unfortunately, an employee, who will have to be called "Mr X", must have believed - naturally enough - that the two entities, his company and the British Government, were quite separate. If he wanted to protest about the British Government's actions as they affected him, he could do quite freely. When he made a complaint to the British consul he cannot have guessed that he would lose his job as a result.

Mr X had been annoyed that he was charged a fee for a letter of introduction required by another consul in order to be issued with a tourist visa. He found the person with whom he dealt officious, unhelpful and rude. He couldn't think why the consulate didn't employ more British staff, such as the wives of British employees in the area. On 20 April 1994, he wrote to the British consul about these matters, and delivered his letter by hand to the consul's residence. He must have felt that if he had posted his letter in the normal way, a minor official would have kept it away from the consul, and he would have received a pro forma response.

Six weeks passed. There was no

promptly, Mr X would almost certainly have kept his job and the ambassador would have kept his reputation. Dispatched on 18 June, it still hadn't reached Mr X by 28 June. He wrote again to the ambassador, a bit more tartly this time, but the tone remained polite. The ambassador was stung. He became angry. Goodness knows how he behaves when a real crisis blows up.

Quite improperly the ambassador wrote to Mr X's chief executive, saying that Mr X's tone was "pretty aggravating", and added that he assumed "he was not paying the income tax which enables HMG to maintain representation here". On the same day he wrote to Mr X, saying his "temperate" letter of 28 June must have crossed in the post with his own letter.

The chief executive likewise lost his temper over what remained, in all its aspects, a trivial matter. Is it the hot climate which does something to these fellows, making them behave as if they were potentates themselves? Poor Mr X was asked if he was the ambassador and the Government decided to run the consulate, had he been aware of the likely effect of his actions on the reputation of the company? Two days later, he was forced out. Mr X alleges that he was told that if he did not resign immediately, there was every chance that he would be dismissed, thus losing all his benefits.

Not easily cowed, Mr X returned home, and in 1995 asked his Member of Parliament to take up his case. When an explanation was sought by the Foreign Office, the ambassador was completely unrepentant. However, we now know what Foreign Of-



Sir David Gore-Booth, High Commissioner in India

fice officials thought. One minute that the tone of the ambassador's second letter had been "uncalled for". Another official called what had occurred "unfortunate". The then Permanent Under-Secretary thought the company had over-reacted. The Foreign Office's legal advisor commented that the ambassador's decision to write to the chief executive had been "impetuous, ill-judged and unwise".

What then, took place next? Did Mr X receive a letter of apology from the Foreign Office and an offer of compensation? Did the ambassador find that further promotion was denied him; did he fail to receive a knighthood when he was expected one?

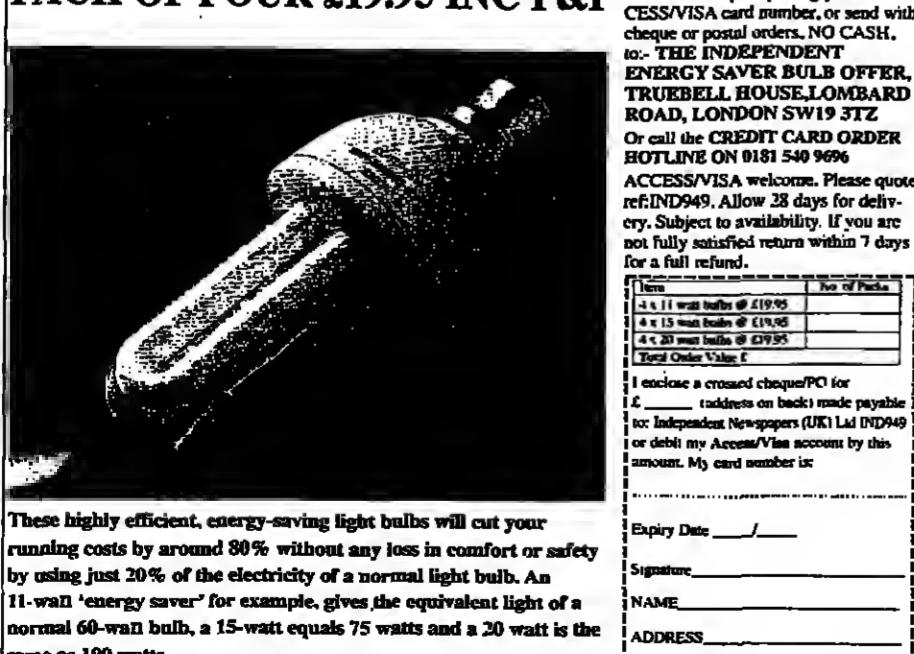
No, none of these things happened. Perhaps this is the most appalling aspect of the story. Ministers were caused to write anodyne replies to the MP, disclaiming any responsibility for Mr X's misfortune. And the ambassador was duly promoted and became Sir David. I can say this last with near certainty because on Friday, Mr X's MP tabled two questions

for the Foreign Secretary, to identify the ambassador concerned and to inquire why Sir David Gore-Booth, now High Commissioner in India (but who is leaving at the end of the year) and formerly ambassador to Saudi Arabia, resigned.

There are two lessons here, one to be learnt anew and one to which I take encouragement. The first is that the State never explains, never apologises, never allows anything to interrupt the steady progress of its high servants, who will prevail and won't be denied their rewards. Ministers rarely challenge this. But successive MPs for Mr X did fight his cause tenaciously. The parliamentary ombudsman was brought in and obtained the apology and financial compensation which Mr X deserved. And even after that, Mr X's present MP, Andrew Mackinlay, went the further, necessary step with his questions to the Foreign Secretary. Parliament checked the power of the State. That is the second lesson. In all its aspects, this is a textbook case.

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Time to kill off some bad museums

THE WORLD wants museums. Throughout the developed world and increasingly in the developing world the demand for museums has never been greater. When one considers that the notion of the public museum is more than 250 years old, this should give us reassurance. Museums are an enduring part of our civilisation. And the central purpose of the museum, in its underlying essentials, has hardly changed. We hold collections and reveal them to our audiences. Museums are about objects and people for they are always been.

The enthusiasm of the British public for museums is currently being demonstrated in a programme of capital investment larger than anything that has taken place in our lifetimes, and possibly even before. No central strategy lies behind it; on the contrary, it is born out of fortuitous circumstance and driven as much by the ambitions of providers as by the explicit desires of users.

The pattern of that investment reflects the two current worldwide infatuations: for new museums of contemporary

art - in Bankside and Walsall, for example; and for interactive science - through new science centres in Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Leicester, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

This capital investment reflects, too, the initial Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) commitment to respond to the needs of museums. That commitment was made despite the fact that there was no underlying strategy and that HLF has little or no ability to intervene proactively in determining who should or should not apply and thereby benefit. In the absence of anything else, HLF has de facto assumed the role of policy-maker. It has been refreshingly catholic in dispensing its favours, especially to museums of modest size and means, many of which are represented here this evening. That, we understand, will continue.

No central strategy lies behind it; on the contrary, it is born out of fortuitous circumstance and driven as much by the ambitions of providers as by the explicit desires of users.

It has still to be recognised and understood. More important, museums themselves have yet to articulate that claim in a cogent manner.

This is not an issue peculiar to Britain. Several of those *grands projets* we love to quote, when we think Paris does it better, are in crisis over running costs. Science centres in the US fail because they have no means of renewing them selves. New Metropolis in Amsterdam, Europe's newest science centre, hovers on the edge of closure because there is no visible means of support.

Despite what many of you may think, it is relatively easy to raise capital for a new museum project, even in a lottery-free zone. The myth is that the running costs will look after themselves. In more than 12 years as director of the Science Museum I have had literally dozens of enthusiastic groups entering my office to tell me about their beautiful ideas. Fewer than 10 per cent had the slightest concept of the realities of life after the tape had been cut at the opening.

Here is another myth: "museums are in the hands of unaccountable incompetents

who couldn't run a sweet shop." There are, of course, such people in such places, but they are the exception. The quality of the best museum governance in Britain is as good as if not better than any in the world. There is a real issue here which none of us should ignore. On 29 June I attended the seminar chaired by the Prime Minister at No 10 "for influential figures from the arts". One moment in particular stuck in my memory, if only because the key statement was repeated at least three times during the afternoon. Leaning across the table to the godfathers of the arts world with unblinking gaze Tony Blair said, and I paraphrase, "you don't need to persuade me of your excellence but you do need to show me that you are efficient."

Good museums have nothing to fear from what will be the increasing contractual nature of their relationships with funding bodies or sponsoring departments. We need to protect the diversity of museums' provision, to draw from it best practice and to apply it literally and with enthusiasm.



PODIUM
NEIL COSSONS
From a lecture by the
president of the
Association of
Independent Museums
at the Bank of England

forthright demands for good building design.

I believe passionately that we need and always will need new museums. But we need even more to kill off a few old ones and we have no mechanism for achieving that. More important still, we have to be confident that we can support the growing family at something above subsistence level.

If museums have any real claim on a right to permanence,

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SKY MOVIES

Kebabs and Wilde totty



JOHN WALSH
Ah, the exquisite Richard Littlejohn,' he would murmur, 'the ineffable in pursuit of the unsayable'

THE SUN has come out as an Oscarist. In the most unusual alliance since Vince Hill sang "Say You'll Stay" to the theme from the overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, the nation's foremost mouthpiece of homophobic philistinism has declared its natural affinity with Oscar Wilde. Ruminating on the unveiling of the Irish playwright's monument in London last week, the *Current Bun* opined: "Oscar Wilde's writing genius lives on 98 years after his death. He has finally got a memorial in this country. *The Sun* says, About time too. He may have been one of them but we reckon he was also one of us. He would have loved *The Sun*." Now that they're such fans, will the newspaper embrace his example?

But would he really have loved *The Sun*? You can imagine him, can't you, sitting among the plush banquets of the Café Royal at one in the morning, toying with a hock-and-seltzer, eyeing the talent at the bar, languidly leafing through the early edition of his favourite journal, kindly brought along by Robbie Ross. "The exquisite Littlejohn," he would murmur, "the ineffable in pursuit of the unsayable..." How he would enjoy the punning headlines, the saliva-drenched telly review, the violent partisanship. And it would, perhaps, give him a few ideas...

The scene: Algernon Moncrieff's flat in Half Moon Street. LANE is arranging afternoon tea on the table. Enter ALGERNON.

Algernon: Ah, Lane. See the match last night? I thought Dublin played a blinder.

Lane: I missed it, sir. I was engaged in procuring bacon sandwiches at the Get Stuffed All-Nite Grub Emporium, for your tea with Lady Bracknell. They are reheating in the chafing-dish.

Algernon: Shame. It was Villa what won it. Though the word "villa" hardly conveys the scale of their genius. I see them more as a country mansion with spectacular wings. Did we consume much last night?

Lane: Eight bottle of champagne, a case of claret, two crates of New-wave Brown, and some Irm Br... Algernon: Did Mr Evans and Mr



Class act: would Dorothy Tutin and Joan Greenwood, in the 1952 film of 'The Importance of Being Earnest', have been avid readers of the *Current Bun*?

Lane: I believe they took a hansom cab to Marcel's Absinthe 'n' Kebab Den at dawn. I was awakened by the sounds of prodigious micturition in the shrubbery.

Algernon: A pity Samantha and Denise couldn't stand the pace. *Wistfully!* They were lovely girls, so innocent and ethereal yet so - so mad for it.

Lane: They were, indeed, what is commonly known as Top Tottie, sir. Algernon: Don't agree with me, Lane. When people agree with me I always feel that I must be wrong. Lane: Leave it out, sir. (Exits.)

Enter LADY BRACKNELL and GWENDOLEN.

Lady Bracknell: Good afternoon, dear Algernon. See EastEnders last night? Looks like it's all over with Ricky and Biancaaaah, then. (Laughs raucously.)

Algernon: I am more concerned, dear aunt, about that Grant Mitchell, and the new bird in the square. His intentions may not, I fear, be honourable.

Lady Bracknell: I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon. I was obliged to speak with Mr Max Clifford about the *Sunday Sport*. They appeared to have gained some awkward

intelligence about my shame at

the three-in-a-bed romps with the Reverend Chasuble and Merriman the butler.

Algernon: What advice did Mr Clifford offer?

Lady Bracknell: He suggested that I tell the *News of the World* I was happy to initiate a debate on the various state of modern marriage.

Algernon (reflectively): The marital state is, like any other state, open to periods of misgovernment. What happens in parlours, on the other hand...

Lady Bracknell: Don't talk bollocks, Algernon. Have you any crumpets?

Algernon: Here you are. (Offers plate.) I do enjoy a nice bit of crumpet.

Gwendolen: Don't get me wrong, I see glamour modelling as a stepping-stone to a career on the classical stage or as an ambassador for World Peace.

Algernon (sotto voce): I love you, Gwendolen. My passion for you is overpowering. My love for you is as true as the wind, as deep as the ocean, as vast as the mountains...

Gwendolen: Mountains? Are you suggesting I've had a Bob Job to Enhance my Assets?

Algernon: Let me take you away. We could get married in Paris. I could

show you the Eiffel Tower.

Gwendolen: I know the Eiffel Tower, you're after. I don't get my kit off for a cent under five grand.

Algernon (kneeling): Marry me. Gwendolen, and I promise to relinquish My Drugs Hell and huy you a posh three-bedroomed home in leafy Ruislip. I assure you I am perfectly sincere.

Gwendolen: A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.

Lady Bracknell: But my darling...

Gwendolen: I don't trust you. I will dump you for Steampy Sessions with fun-loving Mandy 17.

Lady Bracknell (returning): Rise, sir, from that semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Enter LANE: Mr Jack Worthing.

Enter JACK.

Jack: It's Jazza, actually. How are you, Al-boy?

Algernon: My dear chap, what brings you up to town?

Jack: I had tickets for the Palace game.

Algernon: Did we win?

Jack: Regrettably, they stuffed us, three nil. Got any cucumber

sandwiches? Or falling that, some meat pies?

Lane: I'll see if there are some porky scratchings in the pantry.

Lady Bracknell: A bung, Jack, allow me to introduce Lady Bracknell and her daughter Gwendolen.

Lady Bracknell: Under no circumstances may you address me as Lady Braza.

Jock: How do you do? See Corrie last night? That Keo Barlow should be given a good kicking. Phoooor, darling. You're a lovely girl. Bit of a stunner, as we used to say. How old are you?

Lady Bracknell: One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that would tell one anything.

Jack: I sought to establish your daughter's age merely with a view to casting her in a cinematographic entertainment in which I am involved. It is entitled *Kerri-Ann Does Kensington*. It is a video.

Lady Bracknell: I see. (Laughs.) Literally.

Gwendolen: I'm afraid I don't have experience in anything reallyizzling.

Jock: Experience is merely the name everyone gives to their mistakes, darlin'.

Lady Bracknell: I cannot allow this

to carry on. My daughter is a young person of unbesmirchable virtue. She...

Jock: If you play ball with us, Lady B, there could be a bung in it for you.

Lady Bracknell: A bung? Do you refer to some form of bath plug?

Jock: It's a bribe. That is the sort of man I am, you see. Lady Bracknell: I am a little bit whaay, I am a little bit whooah, I am a little bit tasy.

Lady Bracknell: And where am I to receive this... this bung?

Jock: I'll leave it for you in the hallway downstairs.

Lady Bracknell: But where in the hallway downstairs?

Jock: In a handbag.

Lady Bracknell: A handbag?

Jack: Come on, Gwen. A few sberets in Dean Street, then I'll introduce you to some of my gentlemen associates.

(They exit.)

Algernon (opening *Evening Standard*): There is only one thing worse than being shafted by the media.

(Drinks reflectively.)

Lady Bracknell: You couldn't make it up.

Curtain

RIGHT OF REPLY

PETER BOND



The science adviser to the Royal Astronomical Society answers Charles Arthur

THE INTERNATIONAL Space Station (ISS) has become a target for disgruntled scientists and hostile commentators who dismiss it as a "waste of space". What are the grounds for this strident criticism?

First, that it is years behind schedule. Yet hardly any major international projects involving advanced technology have been delivered on time. The Eurofighter is an example.

Second, that there is no guarantee that it will produce any money-spinning breakthroughs. If the 15th-century explorers had adopted the same attitude, Christopher Columbus would never have ventured forth from the safe, charted waters of the Mediterranean. As the scientist Saunders Kramer has commented, "We'll find 10,000 things to do on the station that nobody's thought of or even imagined."

Third, that it is a PR exercise. It is undoubtedly true that Nasa actively seeks to promote the advantages of its manned and unmanned programmes, but this can hardly be a crime for an agency that depends for funds on the support of politicians and the public.

Fourth, that it was the dream child of Ronald Reagan. In fact, an American space station was envisaged back in the late Sixties. Indeed, the space shuttle was originally intended to act as a supply ship for such a station.

Fifth, that the station is unsafe. Not a single astronaut has died in action since the *Challenger* accident 13 years ago. Risk-taking is necessary for progress. The ISS is a unique opportunity to exploit near-Earth space. It provides jobs, boosts technological development and will lead to unforeseen spin-offs. Spread over 15 years, the cost per person is equivalent to less than one lottery ticket per year. Let's build the monster and then see where it leads us.

The deluded prophet



MONDAY BOOK

LIKE THE ROMAN: THE LIFE OF ENOCH POWELL
BY SIMON HEFFER
WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON, £25

treats Powell as just another politician which he was not.

Heffer's second great asset is Powell's own papers. But these turn out to be less revealing than expected. Powell's letters to his - surely bewildered? - parents, from Cambridge, from Sydney (where he was professor of Greek at 25) and during the war, to shed light on his emerging beliefs and ambitions. Other correspondence reveals two intensely homoerotic relationships which inspired Powell's tamey Housman-esque verse, and fills out the story of his comically misconceived pursuit of his first female love (a jolly hunting girl, who very sensibly refused him).

Here again, the early chapters are the

Nobel Prize as much as Milton Friedman. Yet he only predicted the counter-revolution; he did not cause it.

He was unquestionably courageous to highlight the potential social problem he saw developing in his constituency; but the apocalyptic way he did so was calculated to exacerbate tensions, not alleviate them. Powell gave every impression of wishing to see his grim prophecies of inevitable civil war fulfilled; but he was quite simply wrong to believe that "human nature" made racial assimilation impossible. Moreover, he never confronted the historic irony that immigration was only his beloved empire coming home to roost.

Finally, Powell was undoubtedly clear-sighted, from his British nationalist perspective, in drawing attention to the federalist implications of the Treaty of Rome long before anyone else recognised them.

He anticipated the arguments of the Nineties Europhobes at a time when they were all (Thatcher, Benn, Ridley, Lamont et al.) enthusiastically pro-Europe. But the fact that others have picked up his arguments does not make them right. The momentum towards integration is irresistible, and the British electorate - though it is instinctively insular - does not in the last resort share his mystical belief in the uniqueness of England.

Asked in 1982 if he was a Christian, Powell replied: "I am an Anglican". Even his avowed religion was subordinate to his exalted sense of nationhood. But it is dangerous nonsense to make the nation state the highest human value. Fortunately, the British do not believe any such thing. The ultimate paradox of Powell is that he who thought himself so English was in his fanaticism utterly un-English.

JOHN CAMPBELL

The reviewer is the biographer of Edward Heath and is now writing a biography of Margaret Thatcher

MONDAY POEM

TO A FAT LADY SEEN FROM A TRAIN: TRIOLET
BY FRANCES CORNFORD

O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
Missing so much and so much?
O fat white woman whom nobody loves,
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves
And shivering-sweet to the touch?
O why do you walk through fields in gloves,
Missing so much and so much?

Our poems this week come from 'Field Days', edited by Angela King and Sue Clifford for Common Ground (Common Ground, £8.95). Frances Cornford's 'Selected Poems' are published by Enitharmon Press

Three bottles of Hardys for £10. Pop over...

and win a trip Down Under.



Pop into any branch of Thresher Wine Shop, Wine Rack or Bottoms Up and you'll find two great offers on Hardys wine: three bottles of Hardys Stamp of Australia Riesling Gewurztraminer for £10.00 or two bottles of Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Shiraz for £10.00.

Plus the chance to win a trip for two to Australia, or one of

£50.00 Hardys Wine vouchers to use at any of our stores.

To enter, fill in the coupon and send it off with a receipt from one of our stores showing that you have bought any Hardys wines.

Closing date 12th January 1999.

Thank heavens for

HARDYS

at THRESHER

Wine Rack

Bottoms Up

RULES: The competition is open to all residents of the UK, who are 18 or over, except for employees of BRL Hardys and First Quench and their agents. The competition is open to those who have answered the question correctly and who have, at the time of entry, not previously entered the competition in the most apt and original way. In addition, there will be 50 runners-up prizes of £50.00 vouchers redeemable against any Hardys wine in Thresher Wine Shop, Wine Rack or Bottoms Up. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. No cash alternatives. Entries must be accompanied by a till receipt from one of the above stores. Entries will be accepted from 1st December 1998 to 12th January 1999. Wines will be delivered in writing by 12/2/99. A list of winners and results will be available on receipt of a SAE from the organisers after that date. The promoter is BRL Hardys, 4 Duxbury Road, Epsom, Surrey KT18 7YD.

Send the coupon and till receipt to: Down Under Competition, PO Box 1853, Epsom KT18 7YD to arrive no later than 12 January 1999.

In what country are Hardys wines made?

Complete the following in no more than 12 words: "I would like to drink Hardys wine down under because..."

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

DAYTIME TEL NO. _____ POST CODE _____

SIGNATURE _____

John Hanson

WHEN JOHN Hanson met Eric Morecambe, the comedian was in cracking form. Bespectacled Eric looked Hanson up and down and said, "Left your camel in the car park, have you?" Everyone laughed; everyone understood, for John Hanson was the swashbuckling hero of *The Desert Song*.

He was born John Watts, in Oshawa, Ontario, in 1922, to English parents. When he was three the family moved to England, where John was educated at Dumfries Academy. His headmaster recognised his talent as a boy soprano and recommended him to the Scottish Broadcasting Corporation. It was there that he made his debut, at the age of 12. He was offered a scholarship to the Milan Conservatoire, but the Second World War put paid to that. For the rest of his life Hanson regretted losing that chance to become an operatic tenor.

During the war he served in the RAF but was invalided out. He sang for the troops and was offered a long-term singing engagement but his father insisted he follow another career path - a proper job. So he qualified and worked as an engineer.

His father was a test driver for Donald Campbell and thus close to the racing scene, Hanson acquired a love of beautiful cars, which he drove at high speed at all times. He gave his first professional performance at Birmingham Town Hall, in 1946. Two years later he featured in *Variety Bandbox* and *Songs From The Shows*.

In 1948 Hanson married Brenda Stokes (it was love at first sight), a petite and pretty blonde, with a twinkling laugh. Although by nature a very private man, as he became more famous he was persuaded by Brenda to meet the demands for interviews, which he hated, especially with the spectacular journalist Jean Rook of the *Daily Express*. (He described her as "lethal".) After that interview it was Brenda, as

usual, who sent the journalist a bouquet of flowers and a note of thanks, signed "John Hanson".

Brenda arranged all his itineraries and always travelled with him. Together they brought up two delightful children, Stella, now Head of Radio Two, and John Jr, a brilliant lawyer. John Hanson loved his family. In summer seasons, during the school holidays, he would bundle them all (hamsters included) into the family car and take them to whatever resort he was playing. At other times, after each week's show he would drive all night in order to spend time with them and tend his beloved flowers and garden at their beautiful Weybridge home.

Whenever he went shopping girls rushed from behind their counters to mob their idol

Hanson was best known for his performance as the Red Shadow in *The Desert Song*, which led to his being dubbed "the last of the matinee idols". He and his friend and fellow actor, Cliford Mollison, each put £2,000 to put *The Desert Song* on, and it opened at the Opera House in Manchester in 1957. It was a gamble for both of them. "Pop" had taken over and musicals had declined. The show, however, was an immediate success.

Although scheduled to run for only 12 weeks, their tour of the provinces lasted 10 months. After the success of the original *Desert Song*, Hanson toured with *The Student Prince* (1959), *The Vagabond King* (1960), *Maid of the Mountains* (1964)



The last of the matinee idols: Hanson in *The Student Prince* at the Cambridge Theatre in London, 1968

and *The World of Four Novelettes* (1965).

Always, he concentrated on the provinces where he farmed his own company. In 1966 he starred in *When You're Young*, for which he wrote the book and lyrics. He revived the *Desert Song* many times but it wasn't until 1968 that this serious, ambitious man achieved every actor's dream. He took the show to the West End and, gambling again that it would succeed, invested his own money. It did; it was a huge success. "We waited 20 years to get into the West End and it's very nice to arrive like this."

Coincidentally, Topol was playing in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Her Majesty's Theatre. The cartoonists

had a field day with the "Arab Red Shadow" and "The Jew".

The Desert Song was succeeded at the Cambridge Theatre by *The Student Prince*. Again, the shows were presented in Blackpool, for the summer seasons of 1969 and 1970. For the next decade Hanson toured in romantic musicals: *Lilac Time*, *The Dancing Years* and *Glamorous Nights*.

There were concert performances too, at the Festival Hall and the Albert Hall. He appeared many times in pantomime, usually as Robin Hood. He broadcast more than 1,400 times and made 21 LPs

(winning a Golden Disc in 1977). *The Student Prince* alone sold more

than 300,000 copies. His autobiography, *Me and My Red Shadow*, was published in 1980.

Hanson's career as a singer made him a household name. With his chiselled good looks, black hair and glorious voice, he always had a flapper following. Whenever he went shopping girls rushed from behind their counters to mob their idol. Even the middle-aged ladies queuing at the stage door went weak at the knees at the sight of him.

He lived as he drove, at full throttle. He was a highly strung, but compassionate man, who lived for his work and family. His last public performance was at St Paul's, the ac-

Mikio Oda

IN HIS book *A World History of Track and Field Athletics* (1964), Roberto Quercetani, then president of the Association of Track and Field Statisticians, described Mikio Oda as "the pioneer champion of Japanese athletics. Few athletes, if any, have made a greater contribution to the advancement of athletics in their own country".

Oda became the first Asian to win an Olympic gold medal when he triumphed in the 1928 triple jump competition in Amsterdam, paving the way for a Japanese domination of that event which led to further gold medals for them in 1932 and 1936.

He first competed as a schoolboy at the Games of 1924, when he finished a creditable sixth in a strong field. "During that great Olympic final in Paris he gathered many useful hints," Quercetani wrote. And:

After returning home he worked more and more assiduously to develop his potential. In doing so he acted as an eye-opener in making his countrymen realise fully their natural vocation for the jumping events.

He was born near Hiroshima in 1905. For a triple-jumper Oda was small in stature, but what he lacked in length of stride he made up for with incredibly sturdy legs that gave him extra "spring" between the three phases of the discipline. His build also helped him withstand the strains the event places on knees and ankles.

Oda was a fine all-round jumper who set national records in the long high jump, and after graduating from Waseda University in Tokyo he worked as a sports writer for *Asahi*, Japan's leading national newspaper. In October 1931, in the same city, he set a world triple jump record of 15.58m, but early in 1932 he was injured and was unable to perform at his best in the Los Angeles Olympics.



A fine all-round jumper

John Watts (John Hanson), actor and singer; born Oshawa, Canada 31 August 1922; married 1948 Brenda Stokes (one son, one daughter); died Shepperton, Surrey 3 December 1998.



But his father's political career was over. Calling his defeat "a marginal error on the part of the people of Tennessee", he took a job as president of a coal company owned by his old friend Armand Hammer, the head of Occidental Petroleum. Later on he ran a successful cattle-breeding farm in his home state, and proudly followed his son's climb up the greasy pole.

If Al Junior, Washington-born

and Harvard-educated, retains only

a faint veneer of rural Tennessee, his

father exuded it from every pore. As

befitted a man whose primary edu-

cation was in a one-room shack

school in a hamlet rejoicing in the

name of Opossum Hollow, he took his

hillbilly style to Capitol Hill - some-

times breaking off his speeches for

a short interlude on the fiddle.

Asked during the 1992 campaign

about his possible role in proceedings,

Al Gore replied, "Well, if they

get hard pressed and want a hillbilly

speech, I might be able to deliver

one or two."

RUPERT CORNWELL

Albert Gore, politician; born

Grantsville, Tennessee 26 Decem-

ber 1907; married 1937 Pauline La

Fon (one son, and one daughter

deceased); died Carthage, Ten-

nnessee 5 December 1998.

ADAM SZCZERB

Mikio Oda, athlete, athletics

administrator; born Hiroshima

prefecture, Japan 30 March 1905;

married (two sons); died Kamakura,

Japan 2 December 1998.

Albert Gore Snr



The beginning of a political dynasty: the two Albert Gores, father and son

He came from the fringes of the Bible Belt, but was an opponent of compulsory prayers in public schools. He advocated stricter gun laws, and fought the development of anti-ballistic missiles. Most courageously of all, he opposed American

involvement in what he called "the morass of Vietnam", to the fury of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon.

Eventually and inevitably bowing, the contrast between pro-

gressive candidate and conservative

electorate would prove fatal. In

1970, when he was seeking a fourth

term in the Senate, Gore found

himself in one of the nastiest cam-

paigns in Tennessee history against

William Brock, who triumphed by

mocking Gores's support of civil

rights and his criticism of the Viet-

nam war.

So unpleasant were proceedings

that Al Jr, whose ambitions were

plain from his earliest years, briefly

decided to pursue a different line of

work.

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DAVID BARBER

Charles Mohi Te Arawa Bennett, soldier, diplomat, civil ser-

vant; born Rotorua, New Zealand

27 July 1913; DSO 1943; NZ High

Commissioner to the Federation of

Malaya 1959-63; Vice-President,

NZ Labour Party 1970-73; Presi-

dent 1973-76; KJ 1975; married 1947

Elizabeth Stewart (one stepson,

one stepdaughter); died Tauranga,

New Zealand 26 November 1998.

Sir Charles Bennett

CHARLES BENNETT once said: "I am a Maori because I feel like a Maori. I am also glad to be known as a New Zealander. Like most Maori of my generation, my ancestral heritage is very precious to me." He was not only one of the most outstanding New Zealanders of his generation but was a trailblazer for his people, succeeding in many areas at a time when Maoris rarely made it to the top.

The second Maori to go to Oxford, he was the first of his race to head a diplomatic mission overseas, serving as High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya 1959-63, and the first to head a major political party, being president of the Labour Party in the 1970s.

One of New Zealand's most distinguished soldiers, he rose through the ranks to command the 28th Maori Battalion with the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the North African campaign, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in Tunisia in 1943.

He then had an equally distinguished career in the New Zealand civil service, specialising in developing welfare and education policies for his people. As Assistant Secretary of the Maori Affairs Department, he did not have an easy start to life. He was born in 1913, the second eldest of 18 children of the Right Rev Frederick Bennett, the first Maori Anglican bishop. He was brought up by his maternal grandparents in what he later described as a typically poor, rural, Maori environment of the time. He started school in the tiny Bay of Plenty village of Maketu, and claimed that he hardly spoke a word of English until he was sent to the elite Te Aute College, in April 1943. He was repatriated and spent three years in and out of hospital before joining the Maori Affairs Department in charge of Maori welfare. He was active in public life, serving on the State Literary Fund Board, the Prisons Parole Board and the Adult Education National Board.

Bennett also resumed his studies,

graduating from Victoria University of Wellington in 1955 with an MA in history and a diploma in social sciences and two years later won a fellowship to Exeter College, Oxford, where he studied race relations. In 1959, the Labour Prime Minister Walter Nash asked him to become New Zealand's High Commissioner to the new Federation of Malaya. Bennett accepted and became a personal friend of the Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and laying a foundation for close bilateral relations between two countries that had only a British colonial background in common. Tunku was instrumental in 1964 in making Bennett the first non-Malay to be awarded a Malayan knighthood.

Back home again, he rejoined the Labour Prime Minister of the day, Norman Kirk.

Knighted in 1975 for services to the public, especially the Maori people, he remained active in Maori affairs into his eighties, retaining what one observer described as "immense dignity, courtesy and care".

Three years ago he criticised the government for its proposal to put a

NZ\$100 cap on compensation for

Maoris whose land was taken away

by successive administrations.

Speaking at a ceremony to honour

Maoris who had fought in two world

wars, he said: "If the events of today

had been transferred to 1939, would we have volunteered?"

He was buried with full military honours and left a lasting impact on the army he served. Earlier this year he gave a blessing to a new *haka* (originally a war dance, now used for ceremonial purposes) adopted by the army. And the New Zealand Defence Force has decided to change its and the army's official badge, which features two crossed swords, in his honour. At Bennett's funeral, Lt-Gen Tony Birks, Chief of the Defence Force, announced that one of the swords will be replaced by a *taiaha* (a traditional Maori spear) to reflect the partnership between Maoris and *pakeha* (Europeans) in the forces.

DAVID BARBER

Deirdre Bland

DEIRDRE BLAND was a famous beauty and a beacon of style, both in herself and in the art gallery she ran in her home in Sussex in the 1970s and 1980s.

She was born Deirdre Hart-Davis in 1909. Her mother Sybil was the sister of Duff Cooper and the descendant of the Irish actress Mrs Jordan; as a great admirer of the Irish playwrights, she named Deirdre after Synge's "Deirdre of the Sorrows".

Deirdre's brother Rupert, two years her senior and later a distinguished publisher, declared of his sister: "I loved her from the moment she was born". As children they were drawn by Augustus John and painted by William Nicholson. Rupert's nickname for Deirdre was "Tow", her name for hair when a baby – hers was handsomely blonde – and she called him Mit. As adults they exchanged letters once a week right up until she died.

Deirdre grew up into an extremely good-looking and commanding beauty-pole, nearly 6 ft tall: Cecil Beaton was among those who photographed her. She was married at the age of 19 to Ronald Balfour in Westminster Cathedral. He was considerably older than her, having been a midshipman at the Battle of Jutland. When the Second World War broke out he was employed at the Admiralty. After their flat in London was bombed they lived in the country; he was killed in a car accident on the way there when, after working all night, he fell asleep at the wheel.

Deirdre then went with her two daughters Susan and Annabel to New York, where she worked in the British Information Services. Returning to London at the end of the war, she met and married her second husband, David Wolfers, who had been in a German PoW camp. It was at this time that her brother started his publishing firm, Rupert Hart-Davis.

Whether at her home in Chelsea or her cottage in Sussex, Deirdre entertained friends, many from the artistic world such as Gerald Barry, Hugh Casson and Lawrence Gowing. Her third husband, Anthony Bland, was an academic lawyer, and when in the Sixties he became Professor of Law at Sussex University they moved to a house near Lewes. Some years later he took up a professorship in Jamaica and they separated.

Deirdre then moved into Lewes and started the Southover Gallery in her home, which she ran from 1973 to 1987, showing a number of artists including Duncan Grant, Quentin Bell, Julian Trevelyan, Mary Fedden, John Nash and Eric Rofe. A feather in her cap was the occasional invitation from Glyndebourne Opera to mount its foyer summer art shows. The gallery made quite an impact in the community and continued for a time after Deirdre's marriage to a local widower, William Inman. He nursed her devotedly when the advent of Parkinson's disease led her to give up the gallery, and she bore her illness for a number of years with great fortitude after his death.

DAVID WOLFERS

Deirdre kept her youthful spirit to the end, writes Graham Hughes. Even when she could barely speak after a stroke, and with the terrible debilita-

tion of Parkinson's disease, her lively eye would suddenly flash with spirit and humour. She loved to hear about other people's lives from the prison of her bed.

Her house was always a haven to go into – full of warmth and colour and delightful objects. She had an artist's eye and delighted in anything beautiful, whether paintings, plants or pottery. She loved clothes too, a love which harked back to her dashing champagne days. She was a professional model in the 1930s when her first husband was a penniless champagne salesman. They could not afford the luxury meals which usually accompany that drink, so she used to say with a laugh that during those years her normal sustenance consisted of grand champagne with humble bread and butter.

She felt unloved by her mother, and had a lonely childhood, even spending a term in a nursery. All this caused her to decide that animals were more reliable than grown-ups. But the family social life was quite a whirl, as her brother Rupert records with unpretentious charm in his biography of their mother, *The Arms of Time* (1979), which is dedicated to Deirdre.

Its pages are ornamented with some of the most glamorous names of the political, literary and artistic world, many of whom became lasting friends of Deirdre in later life, if only because they were more or less close relatives – Asquiths, Cecil Day Lewis, Wyndham Lewis, Augustus John, Duncan Grant, the Keynes and Darwin families.

Quentin and Vanessa Bell, Angelica Garnett, Ursula Mommens, Julian Trevelyan, Mary Fedden, Peggy Ashcroft, Paul Robeson, Diana and Duff Cooper.

A lovely link between Deirdre's literary and her artistic life, was her neighbour and great friend, the artist Trekkie Parsons. She had helped her husband at Chatto and Windus, and was founded, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf with the Hogarth Press, and used to have a "pillow conversation" by telephone with Deirdre every night, when they would discuss their experiences, recalling the frailties and quirks of their exceptional friends.



Deirdre photographed by Man Ray in c1930

come. In that capacity, she worked for the best couturiers like Molyneux, and was photographed by rising stars such as Man Ray in Paris in 1929 and 1930. So she was able to add to her family's rich cultural life another strand more personal to her, that of fashion.

She was a voracious reader; and her living room was lined with thousands of books. When you pulled one out of its shelf and started to discuss it with her,

advertising them in *Erchange and Mart*. She loved parties and people as well as paintings, and the gallery became a big success. Helped by William Inman, who became her husband, she would sit at a desk in the middle of the gallery, delicately observing her visitors and deciding who might make a purchase, and who was there simply for the fun.

Sales were always good: there were sometimes as many as 130 red blobs on the picture frames during the run of a single exhibition. Always she helped struggling creative people. When she had to close the gallery in 1987, she showed work by 36 artists, all of them her friends. Some indication of her amazing personal magnetism.

She exhibited Duncan Grant several times, always with a special sort of trepidation: she knew that he had difficulty in preventing his trousers falling down. Once, he was sensibly sitting in her armchair when an important visitor started talking to him, and a friend said: "Why don't you stand up, Duncan?"

... "Better not" was Deirdre's decisive comment, with a meaningful look at his expansive waistline.

Deirdre Phyllis Hart-Davis, gallery owner; born London 5 July 1909; married 1930 Ronald Balfour (died 1941; two daughters), 1945 David Wolfers (marriage dissolved 1949), 1950 Anthony Bland (one daughter; marriage dissolved 1971), 1984 William Inman (died 1994); died Lewes, East Sussex 23 November 1998.

She was a model in the 1930s when her first husband was a penniless champagne salesman. She used to say that her sustenance consisted of champagne with bread and butter.

Rupert once told me that he had been a publisher for 35 years and had lost money in every year except one. I asked Deirdre how such an intelligent, much-loved brother could be so financially undemanding. With a laughing glint in her eye, she explained that Rupert had many wonderful friends and he said "yes" to all of them when they asked him to publish their books, even when he knew they couldn't write. He could not bear to hurt anyone's feelings, a trait which he shared with Deirdre.

Probably her first real job was as a model, then a less normal career for the well born than it has subsequently been.

she would often say as if it was a normal event "Oh, yes, he – the author – gave it to me who we were staying with him."

All her extraordinary personal qualities came into play when at the age of 65 and with typical courage, she started a new life after an unhappy end to her third marriage. She founded the Southover Gallery in Lewes. The fact that this was in her home made it intimate and memorable. And she proved to be unexpectedly good at business: she had started to develop her commercial abilities at the age of 11, when she sold her guinea pigs very successfully by ad-

vertising them in *Erchange and Mart*.

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GAZETTE

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh attend the Service for the Installation of the Dean of Windsor, the Right Reverend David Connor at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle; Princess Margaret also attends; The Duke of Edinburgh, Honorary Freeman and Liverpudlian, attends the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers' Christmas Reception at Armoury House, London EC1. The Prince of Wales attends the Royal Variety Performance at the Lyceum Theatre, London WC2. The Princess Royal, Chancellor, London University, visits Birbeck College, London WC1 on the 175th Anniversary of its foundation; The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, National Asthma Campaign attends a Reception at St James's Palace to mark the acceptance by Mr John Major MP of the Presidency of the Campaign. Princess Alexandra attends a Celebration of Christmas Concert in aid of the New Bridge at the Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks, London SW1.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

BIRTHDAYS

Sir Fred Atkinson, economist, 79; Miss Ellen Burstyn, actress, 66; Professor Noam Chomsky, linguist, 70; Lord Elystan-Morgan, circuit judge and former MP, 66; Mr David Evans, trade unionist, 63; Mr Kaffe Fassett, textile designer, 61; Professor Lawrence Freedman, war historian, 50; Professor Sir Abraham Goldberg, physicist, 75; Professor Norman Gowar, principal, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, 53; Sir Bryan Hopkin, economist, 84; Mr Geoff Lawson, cricketer, 40; The Countess of Limerick, Chairman Emeritus, British Red Cross Society, 63; Mr Mike Nolan, singer, 44; Mr Edmundo Ros, bandleader, 88; Sir Sydney Samuelson, first British Film Commissioner, 73; Dr Marin Soares, former president of Portugal, 74; The Rev Ronald Trouson, parish priest, and former principal, St Chad's College, Durham, 72; Mr Eli Wallach, actor, 83; Miss Helen Watts, concert and opera singer, 71.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, sculptor, 1598; Alan Cunningham, poet, 1784; Joseph Severn, painter, 1793; Theodor Ambrose Hubert Schwann, physiologist, 1810; William James Linton, wood

engraver, 1812; Carl Anton Florian Eckert, pianist, violinist, conductor and composer, 1829; Leopold Kronecker, mathematician, 1823; Herma Gustav Götz, composer, 1840; Pietro Mascagni, composer, 1863; Willa Cather, novelist, 1873; Charles Rudolf Friml, composer and pianist, 1879; Ernst Toch, composer, 1887; Arthur Joyce Lulie Cary, writer, 1888; Honoré-Gabriel Marcel, philosopher and playwright, 1898; Fay Bainter, actress, 1892; Stuart Davis, abstract painter, 1894.

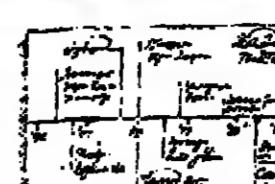
Deaths: Cicero, executed 43 BC; Pope Innocent IV, 1254; Robert Kett, rebel leader, hanged 1549; Adriaan Willaert, composer, 1562; Sir Peter Lely (Pieter van der Faes), portrait painter, 1680; Algernon Sidney, republican and patriot, beheaded, 1683; Melchior Hobbema, landscape painter, 1709; Marie-Jeanne Bécu, Comtesse du Barry, mistress of Louis XV, guillotined 1793; Marshal Michel Ney, soldier, executed for treason 1815; William Bligh, captain of the *Bounty*, 1817; Dr John Aikin, writer and physician, 1822; John Flaxman, sculptor, 1826; The Rev Edward Irving, Presbyterian minister and theologian, 1834; William Swainson, naturalist, 1853; Ferdinand Marie, Vicomte de Lesseps, engineer and diplomat, 1894; Thomas Nast, artist and cartoonist, 1902; Sir Frederick Treves, physician, 1923.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Loraine Campbell, "The 15th-century Netherlandish Schools", 1pm; Victoria and Albert Museum: Richard Cook, "The Surface Treatment of Marble Sculpture", 2pm. The Wallace Collection, London W1: Grania Lyster, "Dutch Genre Paintings", 1pm. Deloitte & Touche lecture at the RSA, London WC2: Lord Phillips, Professor Patrick Minford and Sir John Banham, "The Single Euro-Currency and its Consequences for Britain", 6pm. Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor E.A. Markham, "West Indian Writers in Britain: are we true to type?", 1pm. Leicester University: Professor W.P. Griffiths, "Metal Ox Catalysts in Organic Oxidations", 4pm.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr Justice David Steel, to be a Judge of the Admiralty Court and a Judge of the Commercial Court.



HISTORICAL NOTES

LEONARD REYNOLDS

Dog boats in the battle of the narrow seas

THERE SEEMS of late to have been an increase of interest in the events of the Second World War. But most people born after 1945 are unlikely to recognise the acronym ATB – and the letters MGB probably conjure up only a distant memory of a sporty car.

Things were very different in 1942, at Britain's lowest ebb in that war. At that time, Motor Torpedo Boats and Motor Gun Boats were household words, and their activities described frequently and colourfully in the press, helped to uplift the morale of the nation in much the same way as the fighter aircraft of the RAF who had saved Britain in September 1940. The MTBs caught the imagination as these tiny boats attacked the enemy convoys creeping close inshore along the coasts of France and the Low Countries.

With hindsight, it is surprising that this came about at all. A reactionary Admiralty had shown no interest in small craft after the First World War. When, in the mid-1930s, war again seemed probable, the first moves came from the speed-boat designers, who risked their capital to build experimental boats, and forced the Admiralty's hand.

By 1936 a few were ordered and built, but most

were sent to bases overseas, and only a handful were available in Home Waters. These early boats were primitive and vulnerable, but much was learned from them.

By 1942 the new boats were

benefiting from the technical improvements driven faster by the impetus of war. The harsh experience of operations brought its rewards, boning the skills of officers and men and throwing up leaders with remarkable tactical expertise and proved aggression.

At much the same time, a new breed of boats came into service greatly increasing the flexibility of the force. Whereas as all the boats had hitherto been short, the "Dog Boats" were long (115 feet). They were slower, but had a greatly increased gun armament, and four powerful engines which enabled them to operate in more adverse sea conditions.

The balance in the "battle of the narrow seas" began to tilt strongly in their favour, so that in Home and Norwegian waters and the Mediterranean their impact on operations increased dramatically.

The development of radar, of noo-coot pistol pistols for their torpedoes, and ever more powerful armaments, led to more and more success. The boats played a major part in the Normandy landings, preventing attacks on the constant flow of shipping supplying the Allied armies across the Channel by blockading Le Havre and Cherbourg. The boats were particularly suited to clandestine operations, and one flotilla was employed solely in landing agents often returning down in France.

Above all, their war was a triumph of human endeavour. The crews of these boats were young and resilient and most had no previous sea-going experience – but their spirit saw them through as they demonstrated the instincts of Britain's inborn maritime heritage. Truly this was a throw-back to the deeds of the men of Nelson's Navy: like them, they "engaged the enemy more closely".

Leonard Reynolds is the author of *Dog Boats of War* (Sutton Publishing £25)

CASE SUMMARIES

7 DECEMBER 1998

THE FOLLOWING notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the All England Law Reports.

PENSIONS

University of Nottingham v Eyett and anor: Ch Div (Hart J) 13 Nov 1998.

The implied term in a contract of employment that an employer would not without reasonable and proper cause conduct itself in a manner likely to damage the relationship of trust and confidence between employer and employee did not include a positive obligation on the part of the employer to warn an employee who wished to take early retirement that he would have received a greater pension if he had deferred his chosen retirement date by one day.

Andrew Simmonds (Travers Smith Brindley) for the university; Andrew Stafford (John Yolland) for the Pensions Ombudsman.

VAT

Pegasus Birds Ltd v Comrns of Customs and Excise: QBD (Crown Office List) (Dyson J) 27 Nov 1998.

The Commissioners had not acted unreasonably in delaying making a VAT assessment until they had sufficient evidence to ascertain the amount to be assessed. Consequently, an assessment made within one year of receiving such evidence was within the time limit provided by the s 73(6)(b) of the Value Added Tax Act 1994.

David Ewart, James Henderson, Amery Parkes for the taxpayer; Eamonn McNicholas (Solicitor for C&E) for the Crown.

Majid and Partners v Comrns

Sols: Birmingham City Council for the respondent.

Company director

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry v Kacer and ors: CA (Stuart-Smith, Thorpe, Robert Walker LJ) 30 Nov 1998.

In proceedings brought by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under s 6 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, the crucial issue in determining *de facto* directorship was whether the person in question had assumed the status and functions of a company director so as to make him responsible, under the Act, as if he were a *de jure* director.

Malcolm Green (Treasury Solicitor) for the Secretary of State: the respondents appeared in person.

Fresh evidence

R v Ali and anor: CA (Crim Div) (Kennedy LJ, Abbott, Steel JJ) 27 Nov 1998.

On the bearing of a criminal appeal, once fresh evidence had been admitted pursuant to s 23(2) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968, it became evidence in the case for all purposes in relation to the appeal or appeals then being heard, even though it might be detrimental to the case of one co-accused. Any other construction of the power granted to the court

Own up: who's seen the Christmas decorations?

WHEN I left you last week I was expressing a certain queasy foreboding at the thought that at any moment my wife would step into the room and announce that the time has come to get out the Christmas decorations.

Well, here we are, another week gone and just 18 fleeting days till Christmas, and still not a peep from her. I don't know how much more of this I can take.

I hate doing the Christmas decorations because, for a start, it means going up into the loft. Lots are dirty, dark, disagreeable places. You always find things up there you don't want to find — lengths of gnawed wiring, gaps in the slates through which you can see daylight and sometimes even pop your head, and crates full of useless oddments that you must have been out of your mind ever to have baulked up there. Three things alone are certain: when you venture into a loft: that you will crack your head on a beam at least twice, that you will get cobwebs draped over your face, and that you will not find what

you went looking for.

So you lower your legs through the hatch and blindly grope for the ladder with your feet. If you stretch your right leg its furthest extremity, you can just about get a toe to it, which is not much good, of course.

Eventually, you discover that if you swing your legs back and forth, like a gymnast on parallel bars, you can get one foot on top of the ladder and then both feet on. This, however, does not represent a great breakthrough because you are now lying at an angle of about 60 degrees and unable to make any further progress. Grunting softly, you try to drag the ladder nearer with your feet, but succeed only in knocking it over, with a crash.

Now you are stuck. You try to wriggle back up into the loft, but haven't the strength, so you hang by your armpits. You call to your wife, but she doesn't hear you. This is both discouraging and strange.

Normally, your wife can hear things that no one else on earth can hear. She can hear a dab of jam fall on to a carpet two rooms away. She can hear spilled coffee being furtively mopped up with a good bath towel. She can hear dirt being tracked across a clean floor. She can hear you just thinking about doing something you shouldn't do. But get yourself stuck in a loft hatch and suddenly it is as if she has been placed in a soundproof chamber.

So when eventually, an hour or so later, she passes through the upstairs hallway and sees your legs dangling there, it takes her by surprise. "What are you doing?" she says at length.

You squint down at her. "Loft hatch aerobics," you reply with just a hint of sarcasm.

"Do you want the ladder?"

"Oh, now there's an idea. Do you know, I've been hanging here for ages trying to think what it is that's missing, and here you've cracked it straight off."

You hear the sound of the ladder being righted and feel your feet being guided down the steps. The hanging has evidently done you good because suddenly you



BRYSON'S AMERICA

remember that the Christmas decorations are not in the loft — never were in the loft — but in the basement, in a cardboard box. Of course! How silly not to have recalled! Off you dash.

Two hours later you find the decorations hidden behind some old tyres and a broken pram. You lug the box upstairs and devote two hours more to untangling strings of lights.

When you plug the lights in, naturally they do not work, except for one string that hurls you backwards into a wall with a lively jolt and a shower of

sparks, and then does not work.

You decide to leave the lights and get the tree in from the garage. The tree is immense and prickly. Clutching it in a clumsy bear hug, you gruntingly manhandle it to the back door, fall into the house, get up and press on. As branches poke your eyes, needles puncture your cheeks and gums, and sap manages somehow to run backwards up your nose, you blunder through rooms, knocking pictures from walls, clearing tabletops, upsetting chairs. Your wife, so recently missing and unaccounted for now seems to be everywhere, shouting confused and lively instructions —

"Mind the thing! Don't go that way — to that way! To the left! Not your left — my left!" and eventually, in a softer voice, "Oooh, are you all right honey? Didn't you see those steps?" By the time you reach the living room the tree looks as if it has been defoliated by acid rain and so do you.

It is at this point that you realise that you have no idea

where the Christmas tree stand is. So, sighing, you hike up to town to the hardware store to buy another, knowing that for the next three weeks all the Christmas trees stands you have ever purchased — 23 in all — will spontaneously reappear in your life, mostly by dropping on to your head from a high shelf when you are rooting in the bottom of a cupboard, but occasionally in the middle of darkened rooms or lurking near the top of the hall stairs. If you don't know it already, know it now: Christmas tree stands are the work of the devil and they want you dead.

While you are at the hardware store you buy two additional strings of lights. These will not work either.

Eventually, exhausted in both mind and body, you manage to get the tree up, lit and covered with baubles. You stand in the posture of Quasimodo regarding it with a kind of weak loathing.

"Oh, it's lovely!" your wife cries, clasping her hands ecstatically beneath her chin. "Now let's do the outside

decorations," she announces suddenly. "I bought a special treat this year — a life-sized Father Christmas that goes on the chimney. You fetch the 40-ft ladder and I'll open the crate. Oh, isn't this such fun!" And off she skips.

Now you might reasonably say to me: "Why put yourself through all this? Why go up to the loft when you know the decorations won't be there? Why untangle the lights when you know they haven't a chance of working?"

And my answer to you is that this is part of the ritual Christmas it wouldn't be Christmas without it.

Which is why I've decided to make a start now even though Mrs Bryson hasn't ordered me to. There are some things you just have to do in life, whether you want to or not.

If you need me for anything, I'll be hanging from the loft.

Extracted from 'Notes from a Big Country', published by Doubleday, price £16.99. Available at bookshops and by mail order from 01624 675137.

Highway robbery on the M6

The Nineties smuggler has a Vauxhall Astra and 500 packs of cigs in the boot. By Alex Hayes

It's 5am on the north-bound carriageway of the M6 and I'm sitting in the back of a souped-up police Range Rover. Hitting 90mph, we are on the tail of a white Transit. "Why this one?" I ask the officer behind the wheel. "We look for overloaded vehicles," he replies.

"But we also rely on our sixth sense," adds his colleague.

Now we're in front of the suspect, the message "Follow Me" scrolls in red neon across the back of the Range Rover. "Have we caught a smuggler?" I ask, once we're back at base. "Just credit cards, mate," says the driver, revealing a huge safe.

As he drives off, I suggest that it may be a double bluff, that the booze and fags are in the safe. One of the officers

raises an eyebrow, as if to say, "You've been watching too many TV police dramas, son."

I have driven up from London to join West Midlands Police and Customs & Excise officers in a joint operation. "The purpose is two-fold," explains Bill O'Leary, the press officer for Customs & Excise. "The police are looking for dangerous vehicles (usually overloaded), while we're looking for people who are transporting alcohol and tobacco with intent to sell." This traditional "sea-slam" is part of Operation Mistletoe — launched by the Government in early October — and involves raids on shops, pubs and clubs, as well as vehicles. Tonight's exercise is a seven-hour random spot check of vans and heavily loaded cars travelling through

the night on the north-bound carriageway of the M6.

These officers have heard all the stories. Such as the time they stopped a man in Northamptonshire with a vanload of beer. He claimed that it was for his engagement party. But during the interview he couldn't remember the date of the party, couldn't name the venue and, when pressed, couldn't name the woman he was to marry.

The users of cheap, late-night ferries start reaching the Midlands by 03.00am. A C-reg Vauxhall Astra has been brought in. Looking through the goods in the back of the car, O'Leary points to some hand-rolling tobacco. "Two-thirds of the hand-rolling tobacco sold in this country is smuggled," he says. This is not a particularly big market (it is worth £200m a

year), but it threatens the livelihood of legitimate traders.

"This 5kg box," he continues, "contains 100 pouches of hand-rolling tobacco, bought at £1.50 a pouch and sold at twice that price. These smugglers stood to make £200 profit on those 5kg alone."

The car is driven by a short man with a Liverpool accent

He is carrying four passengers (two of whom are clearly drunk), as well as 10,000 cigarettes, four bootleggers' bags full of tobacco, 5kg of hand-rolling tobacco and some beer. The goods have a market value of £10,000, representing £2,000-£3,000 in evaded duty. After rigorous individual interviews, the five men are sent on their way — minus their shopping.

According to the Customs & Excise Department, smuggling has escalated since January 1993, when the single European market opened. In July, the Government gave Customs an extra £25m to tackle the problem. Currently, it is recruiting more than 100 extra staff. "This kind of exercise would not have happened two years ago," says O'Leary. "It wasn't something that Customs & Excise did. But now, we have completely changed our working procedures. Our methods are much more aggressive."

It's now 4am, and a white van

pulls up. It is driven by a 28-year-old Mancunian and is loaded with 150 crates of lager. Each crate contains 2,500 pints, which amounts to £1,000 of

evaded tax. This may seem like fairly small-time smuggling, but not to O'Leary. "The notion that a couple of mates will occasionally smuggle goods in to pay for their kids' Christmas is a fabrication. There are no cheeky chappies. Even the 'small-timers', like this man, are organised. This is how they make their living."

So how does the "small-timer" get rid of thousands of cigarettes and cans of beer?

"He will probably have a regular list of customers and an informal distribution network," O'Leary says. "He will do the pub on a Sunday, selling to punters. He may even have a mate who runs an off-licence, which makes it a lot easier."

It's now just gone 4.30am. As I sit in the Customs & Excise Portakabin sipping a cup of tea, a huge Transit van enters the car park. It is packed to the rafters with crates of beer that are still in their pallets. "That's a sure sign that this van is part of a much larger, more organised set-up," whispers O'Leary. "These sorts of operation are master-minded by a 'Mister Big'. They're like any import-

cause of bootlegging. A packet of cigarettes is taxed at 78 per cent. As long as this remains the case, bootlegging will thrive."

The Government's position is clear: It is better to lose £1m from smuggling, than £9m through tax cuts.

During the seven-hour operation, 40 vehicles were stopped. Four of them had their load seized. In all, 7,000 pints of beer, 20 cases of wine and champagne, 20,000 cigarettes and 400 pouches of hand-rolling tobacco were recovered during the night. The goods have a market value of £20,000, or £10,000 in evaded duty.

The idea that this is a victimless crime is ill-founded. Many hope that the new powers given to Customs — including escalating fines for persistent offenders, the power to seize vehicles, impose heavy fines, withdraw driving licences and recommend prison sentences — will have a major impact. What started out as a small-scale, old-fashioned criminal activity is now a highly organised racket. And the smugglers are cunning. Maybe I should have checked the safe in that van after all.

A customs officer checks out the haul in the back of an impounded vehicle

Andrew Fox

CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
No. 006735 of 1998

In the matter of Rolls-Royce & Partners Ltd, a Private Limited Company and another

and

In the matter of the
Companies Act 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a petition was on 30 November 1998 presented to Her Majesty's Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of capital of the above-named Company from £1,000,000 to £1,000,000 by the unauthorised reduction of capital in respect of unpaid share capital amounting to £1,000,000.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said petition is directed to be heard before the Companies Court Registrar at the Vauxhall Astra, 100 Strand, London WC2A 2LL on 16 December 1998 in the forenoon.

Any creditor or shareholder of the said Company desirous of opposing the making of an Order for the confirmation of the reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A copy of the said petition will be furnished in any such person requiring the same by the unauthorised reduction of capital on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

Dated 4th December 1998.

Robert J. Edwards
5 Fleet Street
London EC4Y 1HS

Telephone 0171 832 7696

Solicitors for the above-named Company

In the Matter of
LEA BRIDGE NURSERIES
LIMITED

and in the Matter of the
Insolvency Act 1986

The above-named Company has been adjudicated a bankrupt and the said Company is now a debtor in possession.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the said Company has been adjudicated a bankrupt and the said Company is now a debtor in possession.

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Derek and Rohini Barnes, with their sons, Niraj (left) and Himal - both Christian and Hindu faiths are practiced in their home

Photograph: Ray Riley

Uniting our faiths with love

Derek

I met Rohini when I was working as a director of an overseas student hostel in west London. I'd established a rule that I wouldn't go out with any students, but I broke that rule when I met Rohini. Our relationship in fact seemed very natural; we got to know each other as friends, and then it developed into something else. The fact I was Hindu didn't feel like anything out of the ordinary, probably because I'd been in west London for seven or eight years in a multi-cultural context all the time.

We discuss our faiths from an early stage. One of the things that attracted me was the way she talked about her religion. She told me all about the Hindu holy books, and how they're sort of fairy stories. I was already learning a lot from other faiths, and this one seemed very attractive to me.

Also, Rohini was educated in a covent in Africa and knew a great deal about the Christian faith, which meant we both had open expectations. There were no problems for us, only for other people. Soon after we met, some of my colleagues started to put pressure on me, and said that they'd be happier if she converted. That's the assumption, particularly among the evangelical wing of the Christian church.

But we accepted that when we married, we'd keep our separate

Derek Barnes, 54, a Church of England vicar, has been married to Rohini, 40, a committed Hindu, for 18 years. Rohini was born in Zambia and moved to England when she was 17 years old. They live in Southall, West London, and have two children, Himal, 14, and Niraj, 11. Their commitment to two different faiths has caused some criticism within their community

faiths; we never saw them as two watertight compartments, but ones that would flow into each other.

So Rohini would come to church and play the part of the vicar's wife and I'd go to the Hindu temple and all the major festivals. We saw no problem in being true to our own faiths and to each other's. It seemed to fit in well with my Christian background, which is very liberal, and also the Hindu faith, which is very including.

Spiritually, her family had no problem with our relationship. Culturally, though, they didn't approve. They believed in arranged marriages and were unhappy about our marriage partly because she was the only girl in the family. Also, she was bought up in Zambia, and the only white males they'd come across at that time were South African racist Boer types.

Anyway, we decided to go ahead with a church wedding and incorporated one or two Hindu and African elements into the service. Then we had a Hindu service when Rohini was five months pregnant with our first son.

After our marriage, I moved to a parish where there were a number of evangelical Christians. Some were unhappy that she hadn't converted. But I think if there's a little bit of opposition from outsiders, it tends to bring you closer together.

When we first moved to Southall, a local newspaper did an article about us and a retired clergyman then wrote an abusive letter, which was rather sad. He asked how I could consider marrying people when I hadn't converted my wife. But it made us feel that if he was unhappy we must be doing something right.

When we had children, we wanted them to be able to straddle both faiths into adulthood. The older one, though, is pretty definite about what you believe. Rather than accepting your faith parrot-fashion, it helps you to work through it, so you know what it really means.

Rohini

Falling in love with a British reverend really was the last thing I'd planned for. I knew it would be difficult for my family. When I told my father, he was very upset. They didn't come to the wedding, but six months after we married, we went to see them. It was reconciled pretty

disappointed at all that he's Hindu - it's not a competition. I want the children to be happy, and be true to themselves.

On the surface, there's a huge difference between Christianity and Hinduism. Hinduism worships many different gods, and Christianity is monotheistic. Yet Hindus see them all as the incarnation of one God, just as Christians see Jesus as an incarnation of God.

We always discuss these different aspects, and seeing a contrast makes you go back to the roots of what you believe. Rather than accepting your faith parrot-fashion, it helps you to work through it, so you know what it really means.

quickly once they met Derek - and when we left. I remember my father hugging me and saying that everything he'd said should be forgotten. It was so nice.

It was still pretty difficult in the host where Derek was working. Some of them weren't very pleased, because they felt I should convert.

There was a lot of pressure on Derek. I found that painful, and felt rejected, but I tried to take it in my stride because I loved my husband.

Looking back, I was very isolated and naive. I remember when I first married thinking: 'How am I even going to be a Hindu when I'm all on my own?'

All through that time we spoke a lot to each other if things were hurting us, or we weren't feeling too good. For me, there was the gradual realisation that I needed to have a family. We were living in Kilburn at the time, and I wasn't used to being so alone. My only contact with the outside world was the local parish. And some of them could be difficult - as well believing I should convert, they believed I should have converted my family too.

For me, though, I needed to say: 'I am Indian, I am Hindu - that's my identity.'

It was very important to spell that out to people; the community and the local parish.

The response was very mixed and it was then that I discovered that Christians could be very harsh; I don't know if it's the Christian/Hindu issue or the English/Asian issue that worried them most. They kept saying to me: 'Jesus says, "You can only get to God through me".' I expected

them to be more tolerant, not as critical and condemning. We did have quite an amazing reaction.

People have been horrid - we still have people praying for us because I'm not 'Christian'.

For a time, they wanted me to stay away from 'babby Christians' - people who had just been converted. I really have no idea why.

These issues have never been a problem for us, only for other people, it seems. We're never confused about which faith we believe in. It's not a case of being half this or half that - it's always been very clear to the children that I'm Hindu and Derek is Christian. I suppose I have

stepped more in his direction because I've come to Britain - I'd have done that anyway, because things are so different compared to Africa.

We have lots of discussions about our faiths. I always think I'm right, and so does Derek. But we respect each other's point of view. When we got married, part of the service read, 'Till death us do part', which I couldn't understand. Because of my faith, and our belief in reincarnation. I thought: 'But I'm going to live forever and ever with this guy.'

Yet Derek believes in 'till death us do part'. At one point I thought it meant he didn't really love me. We used to have painful discussions about that, but now I laugh about it and say: 'I'll just find someone else next time around, then.'

Both the boys have grown up with both religions from the earliest age. I remember my son saying to me when he was very young: 'Mummy, are Krishna and Christ friends?' I said: 'Of course, they are.' I've wanted him to know that you don't have to reject someone just because they've got different beliefs.

I also think most religions give the same message: be good, be happy and feed each other. Derek and I always say: it's not the religion that's important; it's the love.

Derek and Rohini will be featured in a BBC1 documentary, 'Everyman: Sleeping with the Enemy', on Sunday, 13 December

INFORMATION UNLIMITED

ALL THE FACTS YOU NEED TO AVOID HEARTACHE

No. 17 ALCOHOL AND HANGOVERS

The facts

■ Though drinking makes people feel relaxed, happy and even euphoric, alcohol is in fact a depressant. It switches off the part of the brain that controls judgement, leading to loss of inhibitions.

■ Nearly one in 10 male drinkers and one in 20 female drinkers have an alcohol problem of some kind, and drink is related to 28,000 deaths each year in the UK.

■ One in four male hospital admissions is related in some way to alcohol, and alcohol-related health problems cost the National Health Service around £150m per year.

■ Alcohol is involved in 40 per cent of domestic violence and in up to 40 per cent of child abuse incidents reported in the UK.

■ About 65 per cent of suicide attempts are linked with excessive drinking.

■ At least 10 people a week die as a result of drinking and driving.

■ 75 per cent of employers say that alcohol misuse is a problem in their organisation, and between 8 million and 14 million working days are lost each year in this country as a result of alcohol-related sickness.

Sensible drinking

■ Men should drink no more than three to four units per day, and women no more than two to three units a day. One unit of alcohol is the equivalent of a half pint of beer or lager, a small glass of wine, or a pub measure of spirits.

■ A quick formula for working out the number of units in any given drink is to multiply the amount of liquid in the bottle by the drink's alcoholic strength and divide by 1,000. For example, a 75cl (750ml)

bottle of wine that has an alcohol content of 12 per cent (as marked on the label) contains nine units (thus 12 multiplied by 750 divided by 1,000 equals nine). So there are nine units of alcohol in one bottle of wine.

Why does alcohol affect people differently?

■ Body size determines how alcohol affects us. Big people have more blood in their bodies, so that the level of alcohol is more diluted than the same amount of alcohol in a smaller person.

■ Because women's bodies have more fat and less fluid than men's bodies, the concentration of alcohol in the blood will be higher in women, and women may also be more sensitive than normal to the effects of alcohol during their period.

Drinking and driving

■ One unit of alcohol on an empty stomach results in a peak alcohol level of 15mg per 100ml of blood in a man and as much as 20mg per 100ml of blood in a woman.

■ The drink-driving limit is 80mg alcohol/100ml blood. However, impairment to the drinker's driving ability occurs long before this limit is reached.

■ It takes about an hour for the liver to process one unit of alcohol. A couple of pints at lunch time may mean that your driving is still impaired in the early evening, and if you have had a really heavy night you will probably still be over the limit the following morning.

Tips for cutting down

■ Drink beer rather than spirits, drink more slowly and water down wine and spirits.

■ Choose beer and wine with a lower alcohol content.

■ Buy smaller glasses for the home, and use a drinks measure.

Why do we get hangovers?

■ Alcohol is a diuretic that makes you pass more liquid in your urine than you are putting in. Dehydration gives you a headache and makes you thirsty. Alcohol is also a cardiovascular dilator, making smoking seem like a great idea once you are on your second drink, but if you smoke it adds to your hangover the next day.

■ Alcohol stimulates the production of insulin, which lowers the blood sugar level, encouraging us to carry on drinking in order to take in more sugar.

Preventing hangovers

■ Abstinence is the best way to prevent

waking up with a headache, an unquenchable thirst and the suspicion that a monkey has slept in your mouth. However, there are other tips that you can follow.

■ Eat before you drink - alcohol is absorbed more quickly on an empty stomach. Also it is a good idea to drink some non-alcohol before you drink alcohol - milk can help to line your stomach.

■ Think about your drink - some drinks are absorbed more quickly than others, so their effects are felt more quickly. Wines and sherries are absorbed more quickly than neat spirits and beers. The chemicals in sparkling wines, lagers and fizzy mixers speed up alcohol absorption, while the sugar in sweet drinks slows down absorption.

■ Don't mix drinks, and try not to smoke more than normal while drinking.

■ Before you go to bed try to drink a glass of water for every drink you have had, take two aspirin or ibuprofen and 50mg of vitamin B, and eat a couple of slices of bread and butter.

Hangover cures

■ A sachet of Dioralyte (available from chemists) mixed with water will rehydrate you and put back lost minerals. It also helps to eat a big breakfast, with tomatoes, salt and protein. Take 1,000mg of vitamin C and a double dose of Zinc 86 and Alka Seltzer.

■ Take gentle exercise and a hot bath to try to detoxify your system.

■ Alcohol Concern: 0171 923 7377 or www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

■ Drinkline: 0800 917 8282

■ Alcoholics Anonymous: 0345 697555

THIS WAS THE
WEEK THAT WAS

Today On this day in 1732 the first Covent Garden Opera House opened its doors; now it is defunct (a fate liable to overtake the current one). On this day in 1982, *Hero* was released. English-speaking audiences who suspected they had a problem with the accent were right: it was the first feature film in Gaelic.

Tomorrow 1660 saw a Shakespearean first: a female role was played by a woman instead of the usual young man, with a Mrs Norris taking the part of Desdemona.

Wednesday Sir Anthony van Dyck died in 1641. The Belgian-born portraitist came to London and was made "painter-in-ordinary", although really he was anything but.

Thursday The first night of *Ubu Roi*, the first drafts of which had been written by Alfred Jarry at 15, launched Theatre of the Absurd in 1896. The second night was a riot - literally. The curtain came down in mid-play.

Friday In 1987 a bowler hat and cane were auctioned at Christie's for £28,500, possibly because they had belonged to Charlie Chaplin.

Saturday In 1926 James Joyce began reading *Finnegans Wake* to his friends. As with the recent audio version, that did not necessarily make it more comprehensible. In 1955, Bill Haley and the Comets recorded the classic "See You Later Alligator".

Sunday In 1913 the *Mona Lisa* was discovered in a Florence bedroom. An Italian housepainter had been insulted as "a macaroni-eater" by some Frenchmen and had stolen the painting from the Louvre in revenge (as you do). The first concert in sign language was given in 1989 by a deaf choir performing in unison with a male voice choir in West Glamorgan.

JONATHAN SALE

Los Angeles is a disaster waiting to happen. Whether it's fire, tornado, plague or big cat, something's going to strike it down. In the wake of a new book on the city, Steve Jelbert sets out some movie-style apocalyptic scenarios

The fall of the city of Angels

BOYZ N the Wood (15) "A Burning Rage in Burning Landscape!" After his momma, whom he loves even more than his car, burns to death in her low-rent flat in the crowded barrio due to the slumlord owner's negligence of city fire safety ordinances, young Jesus is let out of jail for her burial. But when brushfires break out in Malibu, he, and all other gang members on day release for funerals, are hurriedly called up to the brigades fighting the fire... and saving the multi-million-dollar home of his momma's landlord. Stars Bill Paxton, Dennis Hopper, Coolio (frequent profanity and use of Spanish).

Hollywood executives in need of ideas for their next "high concept" blockbuster could do worse than read the latest book by Los Angeles' apocalyptic social historian Mike Davis. It's his first since 1990's *City of Quartz*, a gloomy analysis of the megacity's societal divides, vindicated by the 1992 riots (or uprising, depending on your viewpoint).

Recently issued in the United States, *Ecology of Fear* is a beautifully written, frequently contentious and always fascinating meditation on humanity's relationship with its environment in southern California, in reality and fiction.

The above scenario is inspired by a chapter called "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn", in which Davis points out that it's all very well for the rich to build wooden homes in notorious firetraps - large Malibu conflagrations have been used by researchers to model the behaviour of nuclear firestorms - but a zero fire tolerance policy and designation of such events as potential national disasters effectively means an endless drain on all taxpayers. Still, that's where money lives, and the political machines must kowtow to it. Incredibly, none of the area's past 10 major quakes has taken place during school hours.

Disaster can mean profit. *Earthquake* (1974), a big-budget extravaganza, was supposedly inspired by an MCA executive who suggested "What about a picture where the common disaster comes to them, instead of the other way around? Let's get that audience!" Obviously, not only did the costly North-



A scene from the film 'Volcano': mythmakers have dwelt on the destruction of LA for years, revelling in its demise

century. (The virulent pneumonic form killed a man in neighbouring Kern County in 1995.) Investigators have even discovered a family dog carrying the *Yersinia Pestis* bacillus in its fleas. Then there are the raiding skunks that visit suburban gardens...

Something about this over-analysed, confusing city fascinates the world. Even Davis admits that Los Angeles is an aberration rather than the possible future model he previously suspected. Ultimately it's the most familiar cityscape on the planet, seen in thousands of movies and TV shows, yet it remains featureless beyond obvious associations such as the beaches and plush hills. Canny myth-makers have dwelt on the destruction of the place over the years, even inventing scenarios such as the recent volcano and happily revelling in its demise.

Nathaniel West was the first to name a character "Homer Simpson" in his Apocalyptic classic *Day of the Locust*, but it's the Homer in us all that loves to see LA suffer. A century ago a common theme was the destruction of London, mankind's most extreme construction. Now its place has been taken by Los Angeles. Coming soon - the killer bees, feared in Latin America, already sighted outside the city, and spurred to attack by the noise of a lawnmower, or even certain colours...

THE STUNG (PG) - It's time to jump in the pool! The LA Bee Squad work with limited resources to cope with a sudden influx of Africanised honey bees, bad-tempered, aggressive, given to reproducing themselves and to killing people. An elderly country beekeeper is the first victim.

Panic sweeps the city. Victims include partying teenagers, burglars who unwittingly disturb nests, theme park visitors. Participants in a poolside orgy with easy access to water survive. The threat is inverted when an enormous molasses tank catches fire. Chief bee catcher heads home to family unaware of the hive in his roof. Stars Bill Paxton, Rene Russo with clipboard, James Cromwell as the beekeeper (painful deaths).

Ecology of Fear is published by Henry Holt

ridge quake of 1994 do £26bn of damage, its destructive patterns also proved to be unpredictable.

Seismologists now suspect that the geology of Los Angeles, largely built in a sedimentary basin, may multiply wave amplitudes within its confines. Two hundred high-rise buildings collapsed in the similarly sited Mexico City in 1985, and there's no reason the same can't happen in LA. Even if they stay upright, sprinkler systems are likely to fail, and as for emergency services, a single skyscraper fire in 1987 required half the city's ladder companies to deal with it. Incredibly, none of the area's past 10 major quakes has taken place during school hours.

ORNERY CRITTERS (PG) - When you enter the park, you enter the food chain. The small town of Perdido is dependent on hikers who pass through on their way to the nearby national park. When the local fauna start attacking

city-dwelling holiday-makers it's in race against time to hunt the rogue cougars causing panic in the Chamber of Commerce. Features amazing shots of attacks from the puma's perspective, and trash raids from the coyote's. Also has same plot as *Intu's*. Stars Bill Paxton, Charles Grodin (gets eaten), Julianne Moore (in white lab coat). (Environmentally unsound sound garbage dumps, severed head rolls into pick-up truck bed.)

That quote about the food chain is genuine, from a resident of Descanso, just outside San Diego, 100 miles south, where once-endangered mountain lions have taken to endangering hapless hikers. It's a new development - all but one of California's recorded cougar attacks have occurred since 1985. Even the executive director of the Mountain Lion Foundation says "something weird is happening". Davis ponders whether this means "the emergence of lions with a lusty

appetite for slow, soft animals in Spandex". Incidentally, after a woman died in a Northern California attack in 1989 the orphaned cubs reportedly received more donations than her orphaned children. Coyotes are as common in the city as the urban fox is in Britain, and their changing behaviour has been observed over the years. From hunting rodents and rabbits, then raiding animals at the LA zoo, they've learnt to prey on household pets and topple dustbins for leftovers. With the wilderness of the San Gabriel Mountains only 20 miles from the city centre, it seems that the local wildlife has become habituated to humanity's presence.

Still, they won't get you at home.

But the plague might. Yes, there

really are plague-carrying rats and squirrels in southern California. Currently they're found on the edge of the urban sprawl, but both Los Angeles and rival San Francisco have

been seen plague outbreaks this

A case of too much Freud

THEATRE

THE SNOW PALACE
TRICYLE THEATRE
LONDON

whose capacity for living "to the hilt" she emulates.

The play, though, is unsatisfactory on two counts. The immemorial battle between the severe revolutionary purity and belief in perfectibility of a Robespierre and the generous-spirited indulgence of a Danton has been much more potently staged by writers from Büchner in *Danton's Death* to Trevor Griffiths in *Who Shall Be Happy..?*

And it doesn't help here that while Nigel Cooke brings just the right thin-lipped martinet quality to the "Sea-green incorruptible", Mark Lewis Jones reduces Danton to a hubbly-drunkoon boor. Secondly, if the play's intent is to celebrate Przybyszewska, it goes about it in a peculiar fashion. For its implication is that this feminist attitude to the two revolutionaries was almost wholly conditioned by Przybyszewska's own problems with her father - whose identity, in an example of the often clunky dialogue, she

eventually discovers: "You don't mean Przybyszewska, the dramatist, the novelist, the friend of Edvard Munch, Strindberg - all those avant-garde artists, you mean?"

Accordingly, Ropespiele, whom Przybyszewska was unusual in revering, represents the security her unstable background failed to give her, while her progressive antagonism to the rascally Danton mirrors her rejection of her wild, lawless father, who here makes a drunken attempt to rape and murder her.

It's not that such links didn't exist, but that *The Snow Palace* is in danger of suggesting that for a woman in Przybyszewska's position, objectivity and disinterestedness cannot and should not be expected. It seems hard that, after leading such an ardently idealistic life, she should be remembered, not as an independent creative intellect, but as a Freudian case study.

PAUL TAYLOR

With friends like this...

READING

PAUL THEROUX
LYTTELTON THEATRE
RNT, LONDON

ONCE UPON a time, before authors grew too chummy with their audiences, they were viewed as outlaws, exotic anti-heroes, the sort of people who would shoot an apple off a spouse's head as a party trick and then, one day, blast half her face off. As that steely old beat William Burroughs once did. These weren't solid, dependable book-launch sort of people. Nowadays, authors are more like Paul Theroux, bank-managerial in appearance, chummy and full of anecdotes.

Theroux's reputation has taken a knock with this book, though. Auberon Waugh has called it disgusting, and even warned audiences to keep away from the event. Thousands came. But doubts still linger. Could Theroux possibly have remembered all those conversations from the Sixties, or was there perhaps an ele-

ment of précis here, and even perhaps of fabrication? What about, for example, that little girl of nine glimpsed in the book, the one who is said to have grown up to become Naipaul's wife 30 years later? Was that true or not? Theroux, smiling through clenched teeth, said that, well, sometimes, as the Russians know, a writer has to be an enchanter, and it's not true, it has to be true. Which, perhaps, meant something to somebody bedded down somewhere in the permafrost.

But wasn't the project a touch morally dubious? Wasn't he, in effect, hoping for a little reflected glory from a talent greater than his? Theroux hit back hard, though genially. "Look," he said, "I'm 57 years old now." What a body, what a survivor, we all thought. "I've published 33 books. I'm sitting in Massachusetts one day,

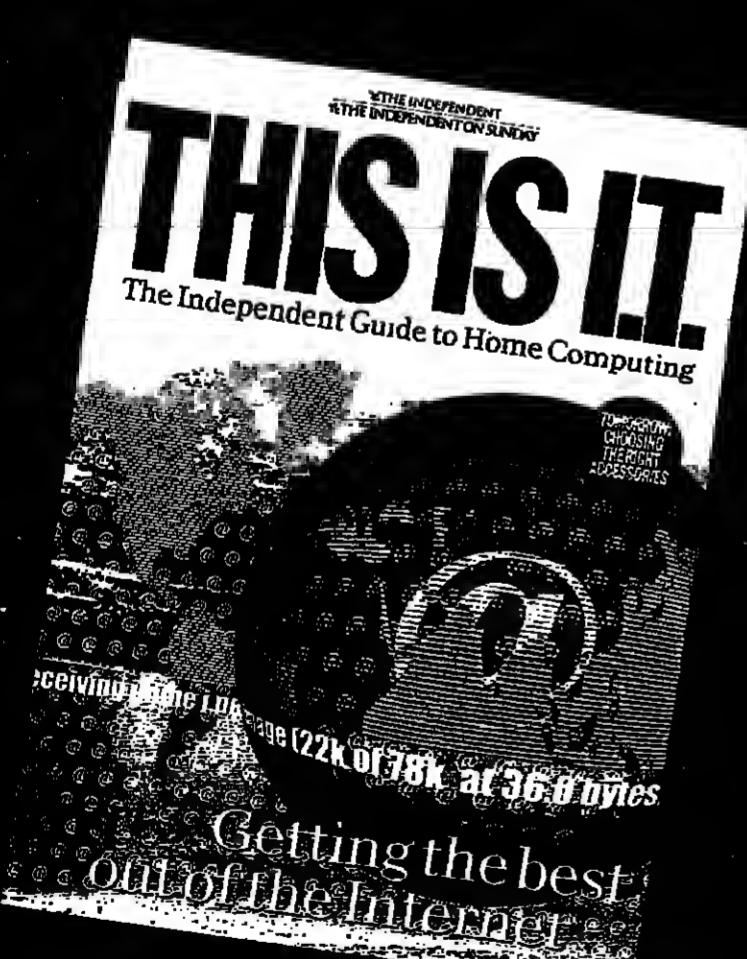
thinking: I can swim - but what else? What have I got to write? Then I've given an idea. It's a gift, a Valentine, this story. I never expected I'd be able to do it. You can only write it when the friendship's over; not when it's in progress. And so I wrote it. I did it. His new wife didn't want me to write it. She said there was a biography on the way anyway. But I wanted to do it because no one has written this book about friendship. No one can do it, because I've done it! It's my book!"

I felt that in the face of such a bout of near-hysterical self-justification, the St John's Ambulance people might be called for, but, all of a sudden, he steadied himself. He stopped spitting bullets, and got back to the business in hand. "And, I'm very happy to sign copies outside in the foyer."

MICHAEL GLOVER

Continuing next Saturday in

THE INDEPENDENT



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10/ARTS

A world with a different set of goals

The World Cup was not all action on the pitch. Football fever also raged quietly, in downtrodden back streets – and was caught on film. By Mike Higgins

Traditionally, television dissolves into a nostalgic reverie at the year's end. Last week, however, the big broadcasters competed for our memories with particular aggression. Kicking off the retrospective season in an unseemly frenzy, the BBC and ITV transmitted within 24 hours of each other *When England Played Argentina* and *Where Were You* – their Identikit reminiscences of the night "our boys" went down to the old World Cup enemy. Both programmes were opportunistic hodgepodes; in each, admittedly thrilling footage from England's second-round World Cup match was intercut with hastily-stitched-together recollections from players, the usual reserves' bench of celebrities and, silliest of all, a selection of "real fans".

There's little doubt that television is the first medium to which we turn in order to feel part of an occasion as momentous as the World Cup. Nothing tastes worse, though, than regurgitated goblets of a momentary national unity served up lukewarm by broadcasters months later. There is an alternative, however. Tomorrow night, *Come On England*, a *Modern Times* documentary, will show that there's an entirely Des Lynam-free way to contemplate the World Cup and what it meant for one particular audience.

Richard Alwyn's documentary is simplicity itself. Over 50 minutes, we see 12-year-old Thomas watching the progress of his beloved England in his Everton home. He plays football with his friends in the surrounding streets and discusses his dreams and ambitions on aimless walks with his father. There's no narration, no probing interviews and hardly any football. In fact, by the action-packed standards of the ubiquitous *docu-soap*, virtually nothing happens. Instead, the eye is drawn, restlessly at first, and then inexorably, from the familiar images of Owen and Shearer flickering on the

family TV set to discreet clues about the world in which Thomas is growing up. Why are the streets in such a bad state of repair? Where are all the men? Is there nothing else for the kids to do than hang around or sit on the sites of demolished houses? The ephemeral hysterics of the World Cup give way to the unspoken drama of life in one of the country's most deprived areas.

"To have gone to Everton, an extremely poor area of Britain, without an external narrative [the World Cup] would have made it more difficult for an audience to find a way in," insists the director of *Come On England*, Richard Alwyn.

'Is the only way to make a film about post-industrial Britain to rub every fact in your audience's face?'

"The common memory and enjoyment of the football allows people to recognise themselves in a situation which, to a large number of viewers of documentary, is fundamentally alien." This isn't strictly true. Places like Everton are all too familiar to audiences battered into submission by a certain type of television. Hard-hitting news reports and documentaries are always eager to cite people such as Thomas and his single-parent family (his father is estranged from his mother) as handy proof of certain social problems.

No one was more aware of this than Thomas's mother. Though a "robust, strong woman" and "a real matriarchal figure in the community", according to Alwyn, she sadly remains a peripheral figure in the film. "Because it's a very hard area," Alwyn believes, "it takes a long

time for people to accept that you're not there on the usual agenda of drugs, crime, unemployment – the usual reasons why the media, with good intentions, come into areas like that. They [the inhabitants] more or less become a shorthand for the worst of post-industrial Britain."

This isn't to say that *Come On England* remains entirely mute on the subject of Everton's endemic poverty – otherwise, says Alwyn, he'd have made the film in Weybridge. He hopes that, while Thomas rides his bike in the local park or sits watching the England vs Tunisia game with his father, certain standards of living the audience might take for granted will be conspicuously absent: "For those who look carefully, there are possible conclusions based on things which aren't overtly stated – there aren't many cars on the streets, for instance. Is the only way to make a film about post-industrial Britain to rub every fact in your audience's face?"

In its own gentle way, Alwyn's "hands off" approach works – it humanises his subjects even as it suggests their wants. Central to this human appeal is Thomas himself, likeable, apparently happy child. Conversations between him and his father drift between England's next match. Dad's lack of money and the chances of the 12-year-old making it as a footballer. There's not a hint, though, that the film ever scoffs at the chasm between the dreams the World Cup is nourishing and the altogether more prosaic destiny that probably awaits him. The film is often melancholic.

As the delightful Stephane Grappelli sound-track acknowledges, it's also keen to convey the innocence of Thomas and his mates. The occasion of the World Cup itself is an obviously recognisable peg for the audience, but the production team chose its subjects carefully and was rewarded for its forethought. Alwyn had had an idea that a young Liverpudlian, Michael Owen, might figure prominently in the competi-

tion. Better still, another England star, Steve McManaman, is an old boy of Thomas's school. The easy identification of Thomas, his friends and indeed every football fan with their heroes owes a lot to a genre Alwyn dislikes.

"Football has more in common with documentary soap than this film has," he believes. "Everyone felt they knew what the World Cup meant through Des Lynam – well-chosen bits of opera and the drama on, off and around the pitch."

Not that Alwyn's football-phobic, by any means. Like tens of millions of others in this country, he thoroughly enjoyed the World Cup and its coverage – be it just that the competition could be used to explore more universal themes. Much

the same is true of Alwyn's three previous films. However, what most obviously distinguishes *A Job For Life*, *A Pleasant Land* and *The Shrine* from *Come On England* are their darker premises: respectively, the closure of the Grimethorpe colliery, the BSE crisis and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Alwyn's ruminative, hypnotic style is apparent in all his work. Thanks to news coverage at the time, everyone was aware of the issues of *A Job For Life* and *A Pleasant Land*. Alwyn's aim, however, was to observe an "internal psychological crisis in community" felt by the Grimethorpe miners and a small Dartmoor farming family. Fortunately, Alwyn was on hand at Kensington Palace in the aftermath of the death of Diana

to bear witness to a psychological crisis on a nationwide scale. The result, *The Shrine*, was breathtaking. Ignoring the news media's ludicrous attempts instantly to gauge Diana's legacy, Alwyn chose to record the amazing thoughts, gestures and actions of the grief-stricken crowds that refused to leave Kensington Gardens for most of September.

Stephen Lambert, the editor who commissioned *Come On England*, counsels patience: "You have to work to watch something like *Come On England* – but if you invest time in it, it will be rewarding." It's true that Alwyn's leisurely film is rather different from the quick gratification that characterised last week's prime-time World Cup recollections. It's also true that tomorrow night's

Modern Times: Come On England will be shown on Tuesday, BBC2, 9.30pm

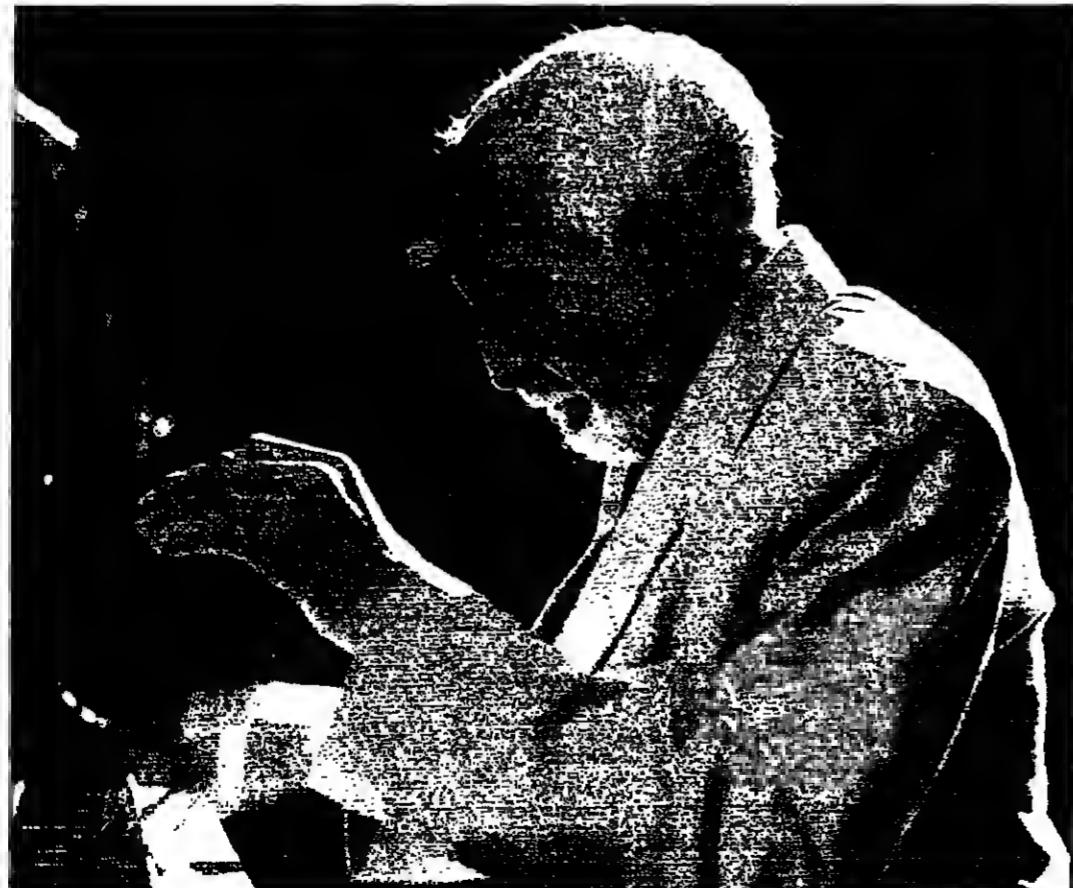


The BBC's 'Come on England!', an entirely Des Lynam-free way to contemplate the World Cup

Grandest old masters of the Cuban rhythm method

POP

RUBEN GONZALEZ /
THE AFRO-CUBAN ALL
STARS
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON



Dignified and gentle: veteran pianist Ruben Gonzalez

Geraint Lewis

AT ONE point at the Royal Festival Hall on Friday, it looked and sounded as though half of Havana was on stage. Aside from a Communist revolution, more Latin-orientated excitement is rather hard to imagine.

The veteran pianist Ruben Gonzalez kicked things off with a set of fragile and heart-stoppingly beautiful small-group Cuban dance music. Most salsa we get to hear comes via New York or Miami, and is packed with steroid jazz and soul muscle. By contrast, Gonzalez's music is dignified and gentle, almost classical in its precision. A wily miniature pianist only just short of 80, he has long been considered one of the island's national treasures, ever since making his name in the legendary Arsenio Rodriguez's early Forties line-up. But as a working musician, Gonzalez appeared to have been lost in the annals of Cuban musical history until the World Circuit record label introduced him to Ry Cooder and set them both on the road towards a Grammy award.

At the South Bank, he played with the profound wit and humanity which distinguish the musician touched by genius. His set was the highlight of the evening. It should not be surprising that old men can make such vital and sexy music; but somehow it always is. Gonzalez's rhythm section looked as if they belonged in a scene from an old folks' home directed by Dennis Potter. They suddenly unleashed a warm tide of rhythm that you could bathe in like milk, while their faces remained completely uninvolved.

The sprightly 72-year-old *sonero* Ibrahim Ferrer – he made his name in the Fifties with Pacho Alonso's group – was merely the icing on the cake: tender but compelling whenever he opened his mouth.

But this was just the start of a three-hour celebration of the sound of Cuba. The 16-piece Afro-Cuban All Stars, complete with five *soneros* and a brass section that could split the atom, were all flash and flamboyance after Gonzalez's aristocratic opening. This was music to dance to. People tried to move in

their seats but got their buttocks trapped between the arm rests, so they headed to the front of the hall to put on a display of British come-dancing.

The South Bank security looked alarmed, but it didn't rattle the All Stars. As the music grew steamier, an octogenarian *sonero* held his microphone to his crotch like an impressive silver-headed phallus and thrust it rhythmically toward the faces of the dancers. As if a band featuring the likes of Pio Leyva and "Cachaito" Lopez weren't enough,

LINTON CHISWICK

Too massive for an attack

PERHAPS NO other band have become so popular and influential while remaining so unknown. Massive Attack are now such a big act that enough people to fill the cavernous London Arena – usually the exclusive preserve of big-haired pop starlets and glassy-eyed evangelists – are even prepared to venture out into the Huxley's community felt by the Grimethorpe miners and a small Dartmoor farming family. Fortunately, Alwyn was on hand at Kensington Palace

to bear witness to a psychological crisis on a nationwide scale. The result, *The Shrine*, was breathtaking. Ignoring the news media's ludicrous attempts instantly to gauge Diana's legacy, Alwyn chose to record the amazing thoughts, gestures and actions of the grief-stricken crowds that refused to leave Kensington Gardens for most of September.

Stephen Lambert, the editor who

MASSIVE ATTACK
LONDON ARENA
DOCKLANDS

Twins vocalist, Elisabeth Fraser. Fraser is an astute choice of collaborator: not only did the Cocteau negotiate a similar career path of immense influence coupled with anonymity, but if Massive Attack's driving aim is to locate a human heartbeat beneath the *Sturm und Drang* of modern living, then there's no more appropriate voice.

Fraser's indecipherable ecstatic warble remains a wholly pure entity, irresistibly evocative of flowery-haired waifs skipping merrily around a maypole. "Tearidrop" is the night's high point by a clear margin. Massive Attack and Fraser between them accomplishing pretty much everything that has ever been claimed by her admirers on behalf of Kate Bush.

However, while the majesty and importance of Massive Attack's records is beyond any reasonable doubt, they're still not an entirely satisfying experience as a live act. It may be that there's not much they can do about this – when you make music informed largely by loneliness and paranoia, it's always going to be uphill work to make it really happen in a vast concrete barn, full of people trying to have a great Friday night out.

It's difficult, while watching Massive Attack performing "Spying Glass", "Rising Son" and "Karmacoma", not to wish that you were hearing these songs at home, alone, with a decent bottle of red to hand.

ANDREW MUELLEN

A version of this review appeared in the later editions of Saturday's paper

VIDEOWATCH



The Complete Fawlty Towers, £34.99

JOHN CLEESE and his then-wife, Connie Booth, only wrote 12 episodes of this superb sit-com. It's one of those facts which is often cited whenever another re-run appears on television. Another one is that Basil, and the creation as a whole, was inspired by a trip Cleese and a few of the *Monty Python* team made to a Torquay hotel in 1971. The hotel was reportedly The Gleneagles, but any resemblance between the incredibly bad-tempered manager they encountered and the proprietor of Fawlty Towers is, of course, purely coincidental.

It hardly seems worth reiterating that this is one of the great sit-coms, so here are a few other production bits. Cleese and Booth only wrote the second series after the immense success of the first six episodes. They both thought that there was nothing left in the idea and, besides, their marriage was on the skids. *Fawlty Towers* also proved to be that rare beast – an English sit-com which was a success in its original form in the US.

Political activism goes online

Sit-ins and marches are old hat. Civil disobedience is becoming electronic, but governments are wising up. By Matthew Burgess

Cyberspace has become the latest forum for direct political activism. Over the last few months, Net-based organisations have shown that "electronic civil disobedience" can achieve newsworthy results.

The principal weapon in their electronic arsenal is "mobile code" — any Java or Active X-style applet that "pushes" files on to your computer. Once inside, the code can access your computer's innards in the same way as any other application. These are the Stealth bombers of e-conflict: small, efficient and extremely difficult to detect.

A few weeks ago, Electronic Disturbance Theatre (EDT), a Mexican political group allied to the pro-Zapatista movement, launched a Java-based attack on several websites: the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, the Pentagon, and the site of the President of Mexico. The applet, activated when casual surfers visited the EDT page, subjected the targets to "denial-of-service" attacks, which would — if successful — have prevented access to any of their password-protected files.

EDT announced the planned date of its supposed raid, leading observers to believe that it was more of a publicity stunt than a serious attempt to penetrate the Pentagon. However, the method of attack holds serious implications for the "innocent" Web surfer. The target regards the hostile applet as having originated on the visitor, rather than the visited site. Anyone logging on to such a site therefore could, theoretically, be held responsible for his or her inadvertent actions.

The EDT campaign marks the first time a Java applet has been used in a live "cyber-attack" by techno-literate political rebels — the first instance of electronic civil disobedience. The group says more attacks are planned.

Less than a week later, the online news service news.com reported a similar offensive against the website of Sweden's main opposition party. With an election imminent, the hackers sabotaged a portrait of the Moderate Party's leader, Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister.

As well as direct action, the Internet is a useful tool for political activists. In Indonesia, student protests have been co-ordinated

an Active X control that skimmed personal banking information from customer websites. The group publicly demonstrated how millions of pounds could be transferred from bank accounts to their account using mobile code.

Fortunately, there are several methods of defence against such intrusions. The easiest way to combat mobile code interference is to configure the browser to block all incoming applets, a solution currently being adopted by many US organisations in the wake of the EDT's activities.

However, this poses a significant challenge to the developers of e-commerce applications, which rely on mobile code functions. Web

EDT's action was the first time that a Java applet had been used in a 'cyber attack' by techno-literate political rebels

across campuses by e-mail and Web-based news groups.

Mobile code attacks are not exclusively directed at commercial or political organisations. During the summer of 1998, hackers attacked the free Internet e-mail service Hotmail, embedding JavaScript code in E-mail messages. When the victim opened the message, the JavaScript code created an apparently legitimate dialogue box that asked the user to log in again to the Hotmail account. Users who entered their names and passwords ended up sending that confidential information to the intruder.

The Chaos Club, a German hacker group, also programmed

sites can also suffer under such restrictions — almost 80 per cent contain some form of mobile code.

Specialised security programs, such as SurfingGate from the US mail service Hotmail, embedding JavaScript code in E-mail messages. When the victim opened the message, the JavaScript code created an apparently legitimate dialogue box that asked the user to log in again to the Hotmail account. Users who entered their names and passwords ended up sending that confidential information to the intruder.

With hard drive contents open to such scrutiny, it looks as though time is running out for even the most casual electronic offender.

Firjan is speculating that mobile code "misuse" could be to the late Nineties what the macro virus was to the mid-Eighties.



Anti-government protesters in Indonesia have co-ordinated demonstrations by e-mail and the Internet AP

MY TECHNOLOGY: SIMON MUNNERY AND HIS TECHNICAL COMEDY PROPS

My controller fits like a glove

IT HAS been a long evolution. About four years ago my act involved a slide projector and a microphone with buttons that worked the projector, and a box of three Walkmans that produced sounds — drumming, clapping and music. It suited the act and made a bit of a show. Why not?

My comic character was, like a megalomaniac, so the clapping and drumming was as if heralding in the big personality. And when I worked as Alan Parker — Urban Warrior, I would do skits with placards with words and drawings. I like visual jokes. In comedy you are restricted visually, compared to theatre for instance. But these tricks of the trade were unsatisfactory, touting around a lot of props becomes a chore and even when I used a slide projector, it was particularly difficult to get the computer to get thousands of images; they can be stored on the computer and manipulated with ease.

The images initially came out of a Psion 3A, which is a tiny, hand-held computer. I got a circuit chip from Tandy that interprets and converts the dial tones emitted by the Psion. I have mastered electronics from reading books.

The chip converts the dial tones into signals that operate relays. The Psion could operate the slide projector and Walkmans. It took lots of wires and I used it only once because it was completely unreliable — every time the Psion sent the beep somewhere in the chain it wouldn't work.

Now I basically control the computer with the Glove of Power. The glove was originally a radio-controlled car component from Woolworths. I took the car off and attached the electronics inside to a computer keyboard, so I could control it from my glove.

Using technology in a live comic skit doesn't come without mishaps. Two years ago, in Edinburgh, Sony lent me a projector, but when we connected it to the computer it crashed after about half an hour. We didn't know exactly when this would happen. More worryingly, we didn't cover it up! The screen would flash with an error sign, there'd be a pause, then I'd try to cover with comedy.

I also use a self-filming camera. I basically stuck a camera to the back of a mirror and put together the video cable from the camera, the



Simon Munnery uses the Glove of Power to control his computer sounds and images

power supply and a switch so I can switch between the computer and the camera. "I am TV" is not my bid for the Eddie Izzard market. As far as I am concerned, no one has made television properly, and I will learn by making it live in front of an audience. I am going to film myself and cut

between the film of myself projected on to a big screen and the computer-generated images and graphics.

The audience can see me if they want, but it's a much bigger and brighter image of me on the screen. The crucial difference is that most comedians have got used to holding

a microphone and using it, not a camera. They are like sheep. But with the camera, they can play stadiums; a microphone amplifies your voice; a camera amplifies a face.

The response is laughter on good nights, weeping on bad. But I have talked myself into this, and talked everyone else

I know into it, as well. I am sure it will work.

Simon Munnery's 'League Against Tedium' is at the ICA, The Mall, London SW1 on 9 & 16 December (0171-930 3647)

INTERVIEW BY
JENNIFER RODGER

An age-old trade at the cutting edge

MY FRIEND Roger and I are headed south on Route 101 from Silicon Valley, passing fields full of migrant workers labouring frenetically against a fast approaching storm. The difference between the "haves" and "have-nots" is palpable as we glide past in our \$50,000 Jeep.

We're headed to San Luis Obispo to lecture a university computer graphics class about the technological future. Roger, definitely a hi-tech "have", tries to even the score by teaching. It's a seven-hour drive twice a month. Roger's been doing it for three years, without pay, at a state school where students tend to be of modest means.

His big concern this year is his lesson plan. He prepared it in August, and now, in November, he complains that the lecture has lost its relevance in the three months since he wrote it. It's the first time in the three

years that he's had this problem. Hi-tech is high-speed. Roger's problem is that he's a hi-tech heavyweight, at the leading edge of computer graphics. He knows about as much about the field as anyone in the world, and he's having a hard time figuring out what to tell a bunch of kids.

For my part, I'm mainly trying to make my way through the e-commerce tangle. I've been looking at pornography lately — that's the topic, not the material. Porn has been a kind of validator of every new medium. The cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker says that porn is an offshoot of what proved to be a successful reproductive tactic by males who had evolved to be mate-gatherers. By engaging in sex as frequently as possible, with as many partners as possible, they ensured that at least some children would beat the odds and survive.

CHRIS GULKER
History shows us that pornographers have unerringly picked the winning media

Stephen Hawking notes that our internal genome changes by only a few hits per millennium, while our external environment is changing at an ever accelerating pace. Pornography,

says Pinker, happens when slow, robust, Darwinian processes collide with fast, external ones.

Historically, pornographers have unerringly picked winning media: they picked VHS when videotape appeared, even though Beta's high quality and short run-time better suited skin epics. Ribald tales were among the first fruits of Gutenberg's press, and the pin-up picture was an early product of the process of photography. So perhaps it's significant that porn has flourished on the Internet. And in an era where sexual contact with others can be fatal, perhaps there's something to be said for auto-eroticism: it's safe sex.

Scholars at Carnegie Mellon University did a 1995 study about online porn. They arrived at an understanding of the dynamics driving the online porn industry. They discovered that the Internet strategy of giving things

away free works very well. The leading online pornography business emerged in 1995 after tripling its business by posting free samples in Usenet newsgroups.

The study concluded that the market leader had succeeded not by technological mastery, but by old-fashioned shrewdness. The concern in question figured out what types of pornography were in shortest supply, obtained the goods and then spread the word, widely and inexpensively, on the Net. Their achievement landed management in prison, but that's a separate issue from the business case.

Interestingly, success was based both on an ancient principle — supply and demand — and an ancient urge. While it's probably best for Roger not to lecture his class about the pornography trade, there may be a valuable lesson here.

Stephen Hawking notes that our internal genome changes by only a few hits per millennium, while our external environment is changing at an ever accelerating pace. Pornography, says Pinker, happens when slow, robust, Darwinian processes collide with fast, external ones.

The main difference is in how this code is created. Rather than being placed inside of a <STYLE> tag, SMIL uses the <LAYOUT> tag to define different regions on the screen. Other SMIL tags can

Cyber smile is here to stay

WEB DESIGN



JASON CRANFORD TEAGUE

then be used to manipulate these regions as desired.

However, more than the ability to move the elements around, multimedia requires to be able to synchronise the various elements into a time line.

If you have ever worked with multimedia programs such as Director and Flash, or if you come from a movie or television background, you are probably already familiar with the concept of the time line. Time lines co-ordinate the ways in which the various pieces of a multimedia production work together chronologically.

SMIL includes several tags that allow Web designers to dictate when, where and how the multimedia content is presented. You can set when each of the media clips should start and stop, their duration, and whether they loop; and you can also synchronise them together so that they run simultaneously. This is accomplished with simple attributes in HTML-like tags.

SMIL is now a recommended standard by the W3C and it is likely to be adopted by all major players in the World Wide Web game.

At first, SMIL may seem complicated, especially if you have to wade through the turgid W3C SMIL specification (<http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-smil>). I must admit that I was highly sceptical. However, SMIL is boiled down to fairly simple mark-up tags, much like HTML. If you can understand how HTML works, SMIL is not much more difficult.

SMIL is worth keeping an eye on in the coming months. Whether it catches on or not will depend on whether it is supported by the major browsers, and, more importantly, whether or not you use it in your designs.

Jason Cranford Teague (<http://www.webdesign-mindspring.com>) is the author of *DHTML for the World Wide Web*, which is currently available at bookshops, both real and virtual, across the United Kingdom.

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The Independent, 7 December 1998

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NEW FILMS

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)

Director: George Miller
Starring: Magda Szubanski, James Cromwell, E.G. Daily
The follow-up to 1995's *Babe* tosses the hapless 'sheep-pig' into the midst of the city where he becomes the unlikely saviour of a bunch of waifs. Knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak, animalistic fairytale that verges on the sadistic. Adults should go a bundle on Miller's skewed, carnival ambience. What kids will make of it is anyone's guess.

West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

DANCING AT LUGHNASA (PG)

Director: Poi O'Connor
Starring: Meryl Streep, Michael Gambon, Kathy Burke
Less a dance, more of a trudge, O'Connor's Ireland set saga pinpoints the ebb and flow of an eccentric Catholic family in deepest Donegal. What gives it backbone is Meryl Streep's regal performance as the brood's eldest sister plus the ever-watchable Michael Gambon as the homecoming brother. But it's not enough, and its static, stage-play origins are all too readily apparent.

West End: Curzon Mayfair, Screen on the Hill

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)

Director: Frank Capra
Starring: James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore
Capra's festive bauble is a lot darker and more complex than it is generally given credit for being, with James Stewart's labouring everyman shown how dreary his hometown would have been had he never been born, before returning merrily to his job-like existence. Its syrupy sentimentality contains a thick vein of bile, and at the day's end this is the making of the film, turning it into a bittersweet salute to the little man who makes a big difference.

West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema

ON CONNAIT LA CHANSON (PG)

Director: Alain Resnais
Starring: Pierre Arditi, Sabine Azema
Love him or loathe him, *Last Year at Marienbad* auteur Resnais is a queer fish. Four years after the

CONTINENTAL

breakfast he made of Alan Ayckbourn's *Smoking/No Smoking* comes this rattling merry-go-round of romantic intrigue, "inspired by the work of Dennis Potter", and featuring a lot of Potter-esque lip-synching to popular French show tunes. West End: Chelsea Cinema, Renoir

RUSH HOUR (15)

Director: Brett Ratner
Starring: Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker, Tom Wilkinson
Rush Hour marries the Hong Kong action icon Jackie Chan with an LA backdrop, a jobbing Hollywood director (*Money Talks*, *Ratner*) and a wise-cracking black comic in Chris Tucker's huckstering LAPD man. Its caffeine-fuelled plotline sends Easterer and Westerner on the trail of a Chinese crime syndicate and oscillates wildly between Tucker's verbal dexterity and Chan's adrenalised physicality. It's a hit-and-miss affair.

West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

TWILIGHT (15)

Director: Robert Benton
Starring: Paul Newman, Susan Sarandon, Gene Hackman
Twilight reunites Newman with his *Nobody's Fool* collaborator Benton for a zimmer-framed film noir which has the former's ageing gunshoe moving in with movie-star buddy Hackman and uncovering a skeleton in the family closet. While this is predictable stuff, muscular acting from a practised cast moves it along nicely.

West End: Plaza

YEAR OF THE HORSE (15)

Director: Jim Jarmusch
Starring: Neil Young and Crazy Horse
Jarmusch's documentary on Neil Young and Crazy Horse is respectful but never reverential, swinging between bracing live footage, robust interviews and discerning dips back into the archive. As a man, though, Young remains oddly oblique and unknowable, loitering in the background for most of the off-stage segments. He's content to let his music do the talking.

West End: ABC Piccadilly, Renoir

Xan Brooks

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

BLADE (18)

Magnificent arcade-game thriller about a New York vampire-killer tackling a power-crazed new bloodsucker. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Virgin Village West End

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)

Samuel L Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in Gray's thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for lunk-headed swearing that sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate rhetorical performers. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

ELIZABETH (15)

Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of a female struggling to gain purchase in a male world. Kapur largely neglects the chance for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty. West End: Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road

THE EXORCIST (25TH ANNIVERSARY RERELEASE) (18)

The Exorcist is a creature conditioned by rumour and hearsay, its legend swelling in the 25 years since its release. But William Friedkin's horror is still terrifying. West End: Clapham Picture House, Ritzy Cinema, Warner Village West End

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)

Terry Gilliam's adaptation tilts at Ralph Steadman's cartoonery for its tale of a drug-fuelled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy, and the one stand-out is Johnny Depp who brings Hunter S Thompson into bald-headed, pigeon-toed life.

West End: ABC Baker Street, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Haymarket

IF ONLY (15)

Mix *Twelve Monkeys* with *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and you'd get Maria Ripoll's dreadful Anglo-Spanish comedy about a dumped boyfriend who is transported back in time by mysterious Spanish dustmen. West End: Odeon Mezzanine

LEFT LUGGAGE (PG)

Jeroen Krabbe's first stab as a director results in an uncertain soap opera, focusing on the ebb and flow within a Hasidic family in 1970s Holland. Fittful as drama, the film comes to life as a showcase for its high-profile performers and newcomer Laura Fraser. West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minima, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street

LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels' defining characteristic is its resilient morality. The picture is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy, who comes unstuck in a high-stakes card-game, falls into the former category; but Hatchet Harry, to whom he owes £500,000, is an old-school pro. West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Mezzanine, Warner Village West End

VICTORY (15)

A Conrad adaptation which takes us to a sleazy hotel in the South Seas, and provides some safe, literary acting from Simon Callow and friends. West End: ABC Paxton Street, Clapham Picture House

THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES (15)

Jude Law plays a vampire who wines and dines his victims. An attempt to give an adult twist to a genre that's principally adolescent enthusiasm. West End: ABC Paxton Street, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House

LES MISERABLES (12)

Bille August turns Victor Hugo's novel into an enormous film and it's as traditional as literary

LISTINGS/15

NEW FILMS

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)

Director: George Miller
Starring: Magda Szubanski, James Cromwell, E.G. Daily

The follow-up to 1995's *Babe* tosses the hapless 'sheep-pig' into the midst of the city where he becomes the unlikely saviour of a bunch of waifs. Knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak, animalistic fairytale that verges on the sadistic. Adults should go a bundle on Miller's skewed, carnival ambience. What kids will make of it is anyone's guess.

West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

DANCING AT LUGHNASA (PG)

Director: Poi O'Connor
Starring: Meryl Streep, Michael Gambon, Kathy Burke

Less a dance, more of a trudge, O'Connor's Ireland set saga pinpoints the ebb and flow of an eccentric Catholic family in deepest Donegal. What gives it backbone is Meryl Streep's regal performance as the brood's eldest sister plus the ever-watchable Michael Gambon as the homecoming brother. But it's not enough, and its static, stage-play origins are all too readily apparent.

West End: Curzon Mayfair, Screen on the Hill

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)

Director: Frank Capra
Starring: James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore

Capra's festive bauble is a lot darker and more complex than it is generally given credit for being, with James Stewart's labouring everyman shown how dreary his hometown would have been had he never been born, before returning merrily to his job-like existence. Its syrupy sentimentality contains a thick vein of bile, and at the day's end this is the making of the film, turning it into a bittersweet salute to the little man who makes a big difference.

West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema

ON CONNAIT LA CHANSON (PG)

Director: Alain Resnais
Starring: Pierre Arditi, Sabine Azema

Love him or loathe him, *Last Year at Marienbad* auteur Resnais is a queer fish. Four years after the

making of the film, turning it into a bittersweet salute to the little man who makes a big difference.

West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema

ANTZ (PG)

Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast stars Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Good fun, and Allen's best work in a while.

Twilight (15)

Director: Robert Benton
Starring: Paul Newman, Susan Sarandon, Gene Hackman

Twilight reunites Newman with his *Nobody's Fool* collaborator Benton for a zimmer-framed film noir which has the former's ageing gunshoe moving in with movie-star buddy Hackman and uncovering a skeleton in the family closet. While this is predictable stuff, muscular acting from a practised cast moves it along nicely.

West End: Plaza

YEAR OF THE HORSE (15)

Director: Jim Jarmusch
Starring: Neil Young and Crazy Horse

Jarmusch's documentary on Neil Young and Crazy Horse is respectful but never reverential, swinging between bracing live footage, robust interviews and discerning dips back into the archive. As a man, though, Young remains oddly oblique and unknowable, loitering in the background for most of the off-stage segments. He's content to let his music do the talking.

West End: ABC ABC Piccadilly, Renoir

Xan Brooks

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Out of Sight (15)

This tale of love on opposite sides of the law from director Steven Soderbergh manages to knock spots off every previous Elmore Leonard adaptation, and boasts in George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez the most romantic pairing of the cinematic year.

Antz (PG)

Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast stars Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Good fun, and Allen's best work in a while.

My Name is Joe (15)

All that one would expect from a Ken Loach film – humour, indignation, emotional sympathy – driven by Peter Mullan's scary, intense performance as a recovering alcoholic.

Ronin (15)

John Frankenheimer's action thriller is buttressed by a fine international cast (Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgård), moody French locations and a clutch of supercharged car chases.

The Fountainhead (PG)

Gary Cooper (*above*) plays a visionary architect who refuses to buckle under mob pressure in King Vidor's astonishing adaptation of the Ayn Rand novel. Patricia Neal smoulders opposite him.



ANTHONY QUINN

The Five Best Plays

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

The Invention of Love

Theatre Royal, Haymarket
A wily, heart-breaking farrago by Tim Stoppard on the twin passions of AE Housman, scholarship and an unavailable heterosexual friend.

Love Upon the Throne

National Theatre of Brent
The Charles and Diana story (well, up to the divorce) presented by the NTB (all) two of them. Very funny and oddly touching.

Kafka's Dick Piccadilly Theatre

Spiriting Kafka to suburban England, this hilarious romp by Alan Bennett survives some peculiar casting in Peter Hall's revival.

Twelfth Night

Crucible Theatre, Sheffield

This perfectly thought-through production by Michael Grindage evokes an Illyria where storms rage as much within as without.

Richard III

RSC, Cardiff
New Theatre

Charismatic Robert Lindsay (*right*) limps rings round the other characters in Elijah Moshinsky's gripping production of Shakespeare's play.

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Mirror Image National Gallery

A magpie's delight. Jonathan Miller curates a show of mirrors and shiny surfaces in painting, with virtuous reflections from Van Eyck's *Arnolfini* portrait to Helen Chadwick's *l'Amant*. To 13 Dec

Louise Bourgeois Serpentine Gallery

Autobiographical installations from the surreal sculptress feature a giant mother/spider presiding over images of spinning and weaving, restoration and decay. To 10 Jan

Bridget Riley

Abbott Hall, Kendal

A retrospective of Bridget Riley's work from her early Sixties Op Art, moving from rippling monochromes to colour, stripes and diagonals. To 31 Jan

Edward Burne-Jones

Birmingham
Museum & Art Gallery

The people's Pre-Raphaelite centenary exhibition gathers together many favourites such as *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*. To 17 Jan

Chris Ofili Whitworth Gallery, Manchester

ILFORD ODEON (08705-050007) © Gants Hill Antz 2.30pm, 4.25pm, 6.15pm Babe Pig in The City 2pm, 4.20pm, 6.40pm, 8.50pm Babe, 8.25pm Out of Sight 2.50pm, 5.30pm, 8.20pm Robin 8.10pm Rush Hour 2.50pm, 6pm, 8.40pm

KILBURN TRICYCLE THEATRE (0171-328 1000) © Kilburn Dancing At Lunch 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm, 8.45pm

KINGSTON ABC OPTIONS (0870-902 0409) BR: Kingston Antz 6pm Babe Pig in The City 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 5.15pm, 8.25pm Out of Sight 2.10pm, 8.05pm Rush Hour 1.30pm, 3.50pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm

MUSWELL HILL ODEON (08705-050007) © Highgate Antz 1.30pm, 3.45pm Babe Pig in The City 1.50pm, 4.10pm, 6.30pm, 8pm Out of Sight 2.40pm, 5.50pm, 8.25pm Ronin 5.40pm, 8.20pm

PECKHAM PREMIER (0181-235 3006) BR: Peckham Rye Antz 4.45pm Babe Pig in The City 4.40pm, 6.50pm, 8.05pm Black 3pm, 6.55pm, 9.25pm Elizabeth 7pm, The Negotiator 3.25pm, 6.20pm, 9.15pm Out of Sight 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 9.05pm Ronin 9.10pm Rush Hour 4.30pm, 7pm, 9.30pm, 8.45pm

PURLEY ABC (0870-9020407) BR: Purley Antz 5.40pm Babe, Pig in The City 5.55pm, 8.30pm The Negotiator 8pm Rush Hour 5.25pm, 8.10pm

PUTNEY ABC ABC (0870-9020401) BR: Putney-Putney Bridge Antz 5.30pm Babe, Pig in The City 2pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.05pm The Negotiator 1.25pm, 3.30pm Out of Sight 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8pm Rush Hour 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm

RICHMOND ODEON (08705-050007) BR: © Richmond Antz 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm Blame 1.30pm Dancing At Lughnasa 2pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 9.20pm Elizabeth 6.30pm The Negotiator 2.10pm, 5pm, 8.15pm, 8.40pm Ronin 1pm, 3.40pm, 5pm

ROMFORD ABC (0870-9020409) BR: Romford, Antz 5.45pm Babe, Pig in The City 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm Out of Sight 2.30pm, 8.15pm Rush Hour 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.25pm, 8.45pm

ODEON STUDIO (08705-050007) 8R: © Richmond Antz 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm Blame 1.30pm Dancing At Lughnasa 2pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 9.20pm Elizabeth 6.30pm The Negotiator 2.10pm, 5pm, 8.15pm, 8.40pm Ronin 1pm, 3.40pm, 5pm

RUTLAND CINE LUMIERE Queensberry Place SW7 101-838 214/2146 Five Gay Tales From France (18) 7.30pm

SHOREDITCH CINE LUMIERE (0181-348 0348) © South Woodford Antz 2.25pm, 5.30pm Babe, Pig in The City 2.45pm, 5pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm Out of Sight 2.20pm, 8.10pm Ronin 8.10pm, 8.30pm, 9pm, 9.30pm Ronin 5.40pm, 8.20pm

WIMBLEDON ODEON (08705 050007) BR: © Wimbledom & South Wimbledom Antz 1.30pm, 3.15pm, 5pm, 6.45pm Babe, Pig in The City 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm Black 8.35pm Out of Sight 2.25pm, 8.10pm Ronin 8.10pm, 8.30pm, 9pm, 9.30pm Ronin 5.40pm, 8.20pm

WOOD GREEN WELL HALL (0191-850 3351) BR: © Well Hall Antz 4pm, 6.15pm Babe, Pig in The City 4.40pm, 6.50pm, 8.05pm Black 3pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

WORCESTER CINE LUMIERE (0181-348 0348) © South Woodford Antz 2.25pm, 5.30pm Babe, Pig in The City 2.45pm, 5pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm Out of Sight 2.20pm, 8.10pm Ronin 8.10pm, 8.30pm, 9pm, 9.30pm Ronin 5.40pm, 8.20pm

WILLESDEN BELLE-VUE (0181-830 0822) © Willesden Green The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Rerelease) 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm Out of Sight 5pm, 9.30pm Ronin 5.40pm, 8.20pm

WIMBLEDON ODEON (08705 050007) BR: © Wimbledom & South Wimbledom Antz 1.30pm, 3.15pm, 5pm, 6.45pm Babe, Pig in The City 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm Black 8.35pm Out of Sight 2.25pm, 8.10pm Ronin 8.10pm, 8.30pm, 9pm, 9.30pm Ronin 5.40pm, 8.20pm

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WILLESDEN CINE LUMIERE (0181-348 0348) © South Wood

MONDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
975-99MHz FM
6.30 Zoe Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo
12.00 Mark Goodier 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Moyles
5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Lamacq Live 12.00 The Breezeblock 2.00 Clive Warren 4.00-6.30 Scott Mills

RADIO 2
(88-902MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce
12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 Johnnie Walker
7.00 Humphrey Lyttelton 8.00 Big Band Special 8.30 The New Jazz Standards 9.30 The Rock 'n' Roll Years 10.30 Richard Allinson 12.00 Lynn Peters 3.00-4.00 Mo Dutta

RADIO 3
(90.2-94MHz FM)
5.00 On Air
5.00 Masterworks
10.30 Artist of the Week
11.00 Sound Stories
12.00 Composer of the Week; Elliott Carter

1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. See *Pick of the Day*.

2.00 The BBC Orchestras
4.00 Opera in Action
4.45 Music Machine
5.00 In Tune

7.30 Performance on 3. A performance given in August in the Usher Hall as part of this year's Edinburgh Festival featuring the NDR Symphony Orchestra as they return to Edinburgh for the second year running. NDR Symphony Orchestra/Gunter Wand. Bruckner: Symphony No 5 in B flat.

9.00 Postscript. Four illustrated reflections on kitsch: Dubravka Ugresic, a Croatian writer and thinker, describes the ability of kitsch to survive Communism, to thrive on war and to reinforce nationalism. See *Pick of the Day*.

9.20 Petersen Quartet. Grieg: String Quartet in G minor, Op 27. **10.00** Voices: 'The Body Shop', Ian Burnside crows as many songs on body parts as he can fit into his trolley.

10.45 Mixing It. Mark Russell and

Robert Sandall came across im-

prop group the Necks during Mix-

ing's trip to Australia earlier this

year after word reached them that

PICK OF THE DAY

THE 1993 EDITION of *Chambers Dictionary* defines kitsch as 'art, literature, fashion, etc dismissed as being of merely popular taste or appeal, vulgar, sentimental or sometimes pretentious'. But that's surely out of date; these days, popular taste has been put on a pedestal (even if it's an ironic one). Over this week *Postscript* (9pm, R3) tries to catch some of the many modern

faces of kitsch. Dubravka Ugresic tonight talks about the varieties she has encountered - she recalls how, during the Serbo-Croat war, she watched *Dynasty* (right) with air-raid warnings flashing across the screen.

The Lunchtime Concert (1pm, R3) features members of the Nash Ensemble in Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*.

ROBERT HANKS

the group's concerts were regarded almost as religious events. In session tonight, Chris Abrahams (piano), Tony Buck (drums) and Lloyd Swanton (acoustic bass) pride themselves on never playing the same thing twice.

11.30 Jazz Notes.

12.00 Composer of the Week: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. (R) 6.00-6.30 Through the Night.

RADIO 4

(92.4-94.6MHz FM)

6.00 Today

9.00 NEWS: Start the Week.

9.45 Serial: Charles Dickens: Journalist.

10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour.

11.00 NEWS: Snapshots from the New South Africa.

12.00 NEWS: You and Yours.

1.00 The World at One.

1.30 Round Britain Quiz.

2.00 NEWS: The Archers.

2.15 NEWS: Afternoon Play: Life's Little Ironies.

3.00 MONEY Box Live: 0171 580 4444.

3.30 The Lost Art of Convalescence. (R)

3.45 Angel Fish.

4.00 NEWS: The Food Programme.

4.30 Turning World.

5.00 PM

6.00 Six O'Clock News.

6.30 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue.

7.00 NEWS: The Archers.

7.45 Front Row: Mark Lawson with the arts show.

7.45 Stilt Waters. By Ann Marie Di

Mambro. Joanna and Douglas investigate the desecration of a local church. Meanwhile, Kate attempts to come to terms with Philip's abrupt departure. With Ann Scott-Jones, Emma Currie and Liam Brennan. Director David Jackson Young. Part 21.

8.00 NEWS: Managing Lite.

'Can't Cope'. In the last of four programmes, life-sentenced prisoners in Glemchill discuss their difficulties in coping.

8.30 ANALYSIS: 'The Moderate Majority'. The results of the American mid-term elections suggest that voters remain unconvinced by Republican attacks on President Clinton's personal behaviour. Peter Kellner asks if the United States is turning against moral and political extremism, and what the implications are for the future direction of American politics.

9.00 NEWS: Nature: A Drop of Life. Hidden from the naked eye, there are beasts so small that their entire world is a single drop of water.

The affable 'Ford Corntina', the neurotic 'Mass Hysteria' and the menacing 'Terminator' - as they are so called - are just some of these strange animals.

9.30 Start the Week. Jeremy Paxman sets the cultural agenda for the week, with guests including American satirist and political commentator PJ O'Rourke, and former EU peace envoy during the Bosnian conflict, Carl Bildt.

10.00 The World Tonight. With Robin Lustig.

10.45 Book at Bedtime: Spider-



web. By Penelope Lively, read by Stephanie Cole. Retirement to a West Country hamlet proves to be less tranquil than expected for anthropologist Stella Brentwood, as relationships old and new interweave (1/10).

11.00 Radio 4 Appeal. Terry Waite speaks on behalf of Inside Out Trust, a charity which sets up projects to enable prisoners to learn skills to help charities and community organisations.

11.00 Fatherland. (R) 11.30 Aerial Views.

12.00 News.

12.30 Late Book: Human Voices. 4.00 Shipping Forecast.

1.00 As World Service.

5.35 Shipping Forecast.

5.45 Prayer for the Day.

5.45-6.00 Farming Today.

6.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(215-1197-1260kHz MW 1055MHz FM)

6.30 Chris Evans 9.30 Classic Countdown with Russ Williams.

1.00 Nick Abbott 4.00 **Bobby Hair** / **5.00 Harriet Scott** from 6.45. 7.30 **Harriet Scott**. 10.00 **Mark Forrest**. 1.00 **James Merritt**.

4.30-6.30 Jeremy Clark.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

(198kHz LW)

1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 Seven Days.

1.45 Wood, Guts and Brass.

2.00 Newsday 2.30 On Screen.

3.00 World News.

3.15 Sports Roundup 3.30 Idea of the City. 4.00-7.00 **World Today**.

TALK RADIO

6.00 Bill O'Herlon and Clare Catford.

9.00 Scott Chisholm, 12.00 Lorraine Kelly, 2.00 Anna Rabe.

4.00 Peter Deely, 5.00 **The Sports Zone**, 8.00 **James Whate**.

1.00-6.00 Ian Collins.

ager Harry Redknapp and family. **8.00 Trevor Brooking's Monday Match**. Trevor Brooking introduces commentary from Hillsborough, where Sheffield Wednesday take on Nottingham Forest in the FA Carling Premiership. Plus all the latest news from across the continent in the European football round-up.

10.00 Late Night Live. Nick Robinson sets tomorrow's agenda today. Including at 10.30 a full round-up of the day's sport, and at 11.00 news briefing.

1.00 Up All Night. **5.00-6.00 Morning Reports**.

CLASSIC FM

(100.0-101.9MHz FM)

6.00 Nick Bailey, 8.00 **Henry Kelly**, 12.00 **Requests**, 3.00 **Concerto**, 3.00 **Jamie Clegg**, 6.30 **Newsnight**, 7.00 **Smooth Classics** at Seven, 9.00 **Evening Concert**: Beethoven: 12 Variations on a Theme by Handel. Pierre Fournier (cello), Friedrich Gulda (piano).

11.00 Radio 4 Appeal. Terry Waite speaks on behalf of Inside Out Trust, a charity which sets up projects to enable prisoners to learn skills to help charities and community organisations.

11.00 Fatherland. (R)

11.30 Aerial Views.

12.00 News.

12.30 Late Book: Human Voices. 4.00 Shipping Forecast.

1.00 As World Service.

5.35 Shipping Forecast.

5.45 Prayer for the Day.

5.45-6.00 Farming Today.

6.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(215-1197-1260kHz MW 1055MHz FM)

6.30 Chris Evans 9.30 Classic Countdown with Russ Williams.

1.00 Nick Abbott 4.00 **Bobby Hair** / **5.00 Harriet Scott** from 6.45. 7.30 **Harriet Scott**. 10.00 **Mark Forrest**. 1.00 **James Merritt**.

4.30-6.30 Jeremy Clark.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

(198kHz LW)

1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 Seven Days.

1.45 Wood, Guts and Brass.

2.00 Newsday 2.30 On Screen.

3.00 World News.

3.15 Sports Roundup 3.30 Idea of the City. 4.00-7.00 **World Today**.

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4.00 Peter Deely, 5.00 **The Sports Zone**, 8.00 **James Whate**.

1.00-6.00 Ian Collins.

SKY PREMIER

6.00 A Christmas Carol (1984) (8757). 8.00 Magic in the Water (1995) (9957).

10.00 Napoleon and Samantha (1972) (32261). 12.00 A Christmas Carol (1984) (8757). 1.45 Magic in the Water (1995) (9957). 3.30 The Starless (1998) (7658). 4.00 The Starless (1998) (7658). 6.00 Amy (1981) (65804). 8.00 The Odyssey (1997) (839552). 10.30 **Liar Liar** (1997) (37755). 12.00 **The Deliverance of Elain** (1996) (81137). 1.30 **The Abyss** (1989) (75009359). 3.50-6.00 **Murder Witness** (1995) (3199361).

SKY MOVIES

6.00 **James** (1994) (8000). 7.30 **Bury Me in Niagara** (1992) (94585). 9.00 **A Holiday for Love** (1996) (45955). 11.00 **Tear of Tears** (1995) (95333). 1.30 **1000 Friends** (1995) (95333). 3.25 **The Long Hot Summer** (1995) (23484).

7.00 **A Holiday for Love** (1992) (94585).

9.00 Turbulence (1997) (97878). 11.00 **Don't Be a Menace to South Central while Drinking Your Juice in the Hood** (1997) (98255). 2.

Fear

BBC1

BBC2

MONDAY TELEVISION

ITV Carlton

Channel 4

Channel 5

THE MONDAY REVIEW

The Independent December 1998

PETER CONCHIE

TELEVISION REVIEW



ON SATURDAY night, *Pantoland* made George Michael (BBC1) infinite an important cultural transition from country which has been going through a particularly inward, drawn-out and painful internal process. Since the early Sixties, an interview full of avaricious and mutual respect spooked slightly that particularity, which is so right, revealing the collective British sense of humour, but when onto its own path, opening the closet door.

Almost before you sat down, your seat for one of the anticipated television interviews of the decade - up there with Martin Basurti's Spencer and Woodward - George had broken the ice with a self-deprecating remark about not being invited on *Life's A Party* - got his witty out. From that point on, it was a case of Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About The Artist, But Were Afraid To Ask. Thankfully, *Pantoland* went. George exploited the new stomach which the recent public interest in his sexuality has given him. While I followed his thesis that he was funny, open and easy, both with himself and with his wife, Pam, I was afraid, he was a bore. *Pantoland* was, in front of a 'house' crowd, given that what we were witnessing was two people from different generations talking about 'outing' - the practice whereby gay men use public toilets as a rendezvous for casual sex - what impressed most was Party's affirmative open body language. It was so *Naïve*. He was sitting back in his chair with his legs open, swinging his legs from side to side, leaning happily from side to side, leaning

on his "party" out.

On Saturday night, *Pantoland* lug forward and grinding. All point he actually rubbishes his words, could, in fact, be his. It was us putting his comment on ease. As Party finished, as the nation's instant, it's time with Party, well, it's time with us too. At the end, folk like bunging him a manic critique of that particularity, which is so right, revealing the collective British sense of humour, but when onto its own path, opening the closet door.

An interesting, if jumbled, new series, frustrated with the Ger-

man critics approved, the art

critic, Weilert, Juncker

grants, could have made the

three-stage leap from cave paint-

ings to Damien Hirst, Januscek

started in southern Africa, where

he reflected away at cave paintings.

These are not "primitive" scratch-

ings. It still isn't cool.

The different elements were

so distinct you could, at times,

have been watching a different

programme; the Altonbrough

team of *Artists* the future, led by

starched, inhuman, teethings in

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